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Vol. CCXVI  
No. 5650

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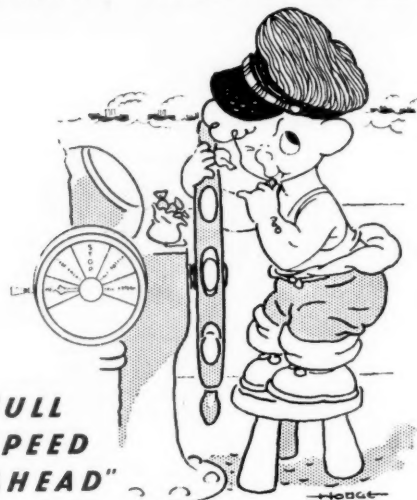
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"Pussy-willow" "Rock Garden"  
pure silk crepe-de-chine prints  
by

## Jacqueline

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Steady progress of the

*Smith Triplets* on



# LACTA

Enriched with Vitamin D  
THE PERFECT NURSERY MILK FOOD

Report from parents :

|           | PETER           | WENDY          | PAULINE         |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 10th week | 8 lbs. 11 ozs.  | 7 lbs. 8½ ozs. | 7 lbs. 13 ozs.  |
| 11th week | 9 lbs. 6 ozs.   | 8 lbs. 0 ozs.  | 8 lbs. 5½ ozs.  |
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The Triplets are very happy and contented and are much admired by everybody. Several people have made a point of asking the brand of milk food they are being given. (signed) B. Smith.

A UNITED DAIRIES PRODUCT

Prepared by Wilts United Dairies Ltd., Trowbridge, Wilts.



Wool from a famous strain of mountain sheep—the Scotch Black-faced—is blended with other specially selected wools and spun into tough, springy carpet yarn. It is this yarn, woven on modern looms by craftsmen weavers of Kilmarnock, that gives such resilience, comfort and long life to every carpet and rug bearing the B M K label.

LOOK FOR THIS LABEL!



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always



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bottle

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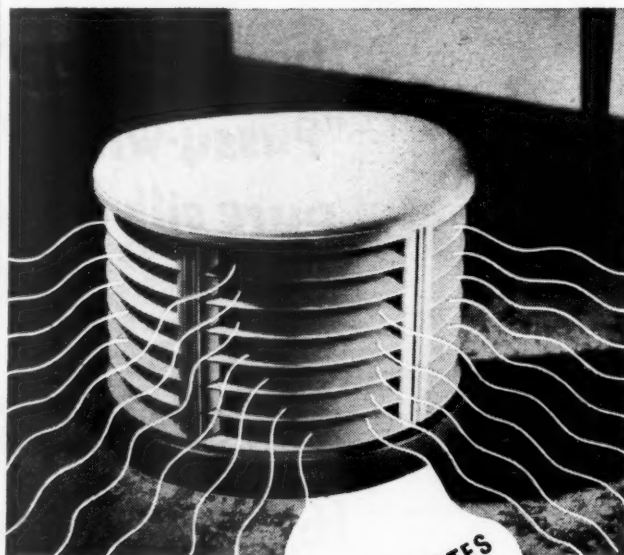


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THE WAUKEEZI SHOE CO. LTD., NORTHAMPTON

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It **CIRCULATES**  
warm 'air'

A GOOD circulation is as much the secret of a warm room as it is of a warm body. That is why the electrically operated *Cavendish Heater* brings a new kind of luxury into the home. It draws in cold air, heats it, then by means of an internal fan circulates warm air at the rate of 120 cubic feet a minute... warmth that uniformly circulates throughout the whole room. Though its internal lamp gives an invitingly cosy glow, you

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PRICE £15.9.5 INCLUDING TAX



THE

*Cavendish* HEATER

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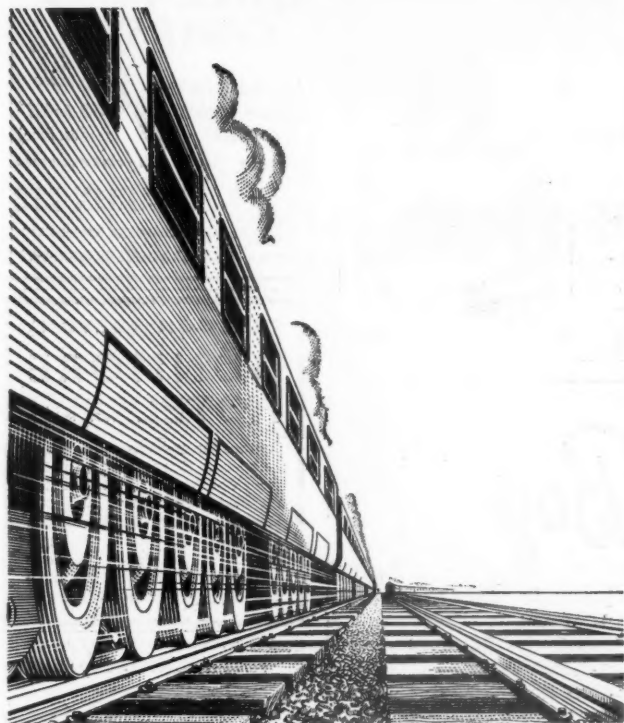
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CVS-23



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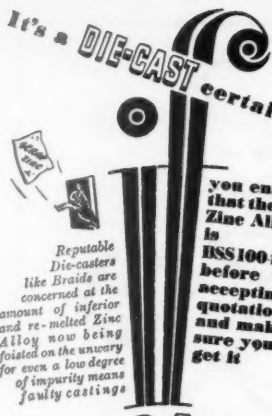
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I'd feel so silly if people knew I used to think Pimm's No.1 was a kind of typewriter. That was *years* ago, of course, when I was completely uneducated and couldn't tell a gin-sling from a catapult."

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*all shrewd judges smoke*

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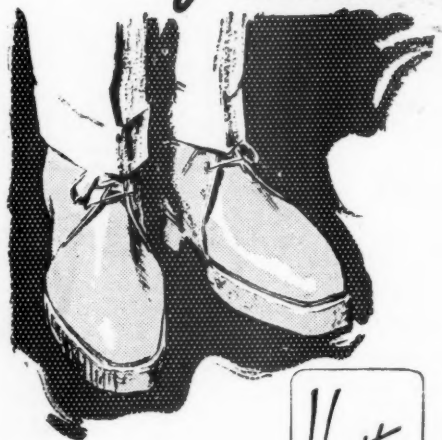
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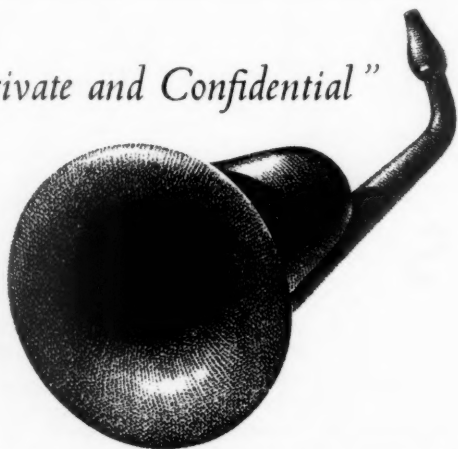
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long-life  
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LIMITED



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BRITISH SOUTH AMERICAN AIRWAYS operate the most frequent — and therefore the most time-saving — air-service to the principal cities on South America's Eastern seaboard. For example, you can set out from London, spend two clear days in Rio de Janeiro and three clear days in Buenos Aires (or *vice versa*) and be back in London eleven days later.

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*Subject to alteration*

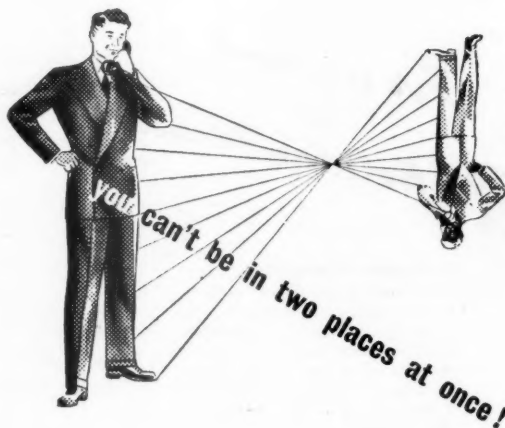
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It's often cheaper to ship by air  
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*Business by Air - by*

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A lot of people are trying to open an Australian market with an incomplete knowledge of the buying habits of that continent. For them, the problem of being in two places at once is a real one, but fortunately there is a solution to it. They can deal through an organisation that includes an active partner in Australia. The Samson Clark organisation works hand-in-hand with the Hugh Berry Company of Sydney to provide the sort of experienced co-operation that leads to sound business and steady sales.

NO SAYING IS TRITE UNTIL EVERYBODY KNOWS IT. SO WE MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR REPEATING THIS ONE — "YOU CAN'T BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE".

**SAMSON CLARKS**

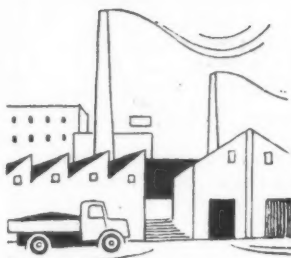
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Sydney, Australia

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# RATS MICE & INSECT **PESTS!**

The urgency of the problem has the attention of Parliament, and emphasis is laid more than ever on the fact that responsibility to clear infested premises of rats, mice, and insect pests rests on the individual occupier, or management.



The debates on this subject have revealed how widespread is this menace to food and property, and the health of the nation.

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The Ratin Service, by its scientific methods, has handled successfully over 40,000 contracts for clearing premises of rats, mice, and insect pests. Wherever you may be situated, its nation-wide Service operating from 44 centres can solve your particular pest problem. 'Phone ABBey 7621 or write to-day.



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*covers the country*

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Please remember the

## N.S.P.C.C



President: H.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH

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The richness in colours surpasses all other flowers.

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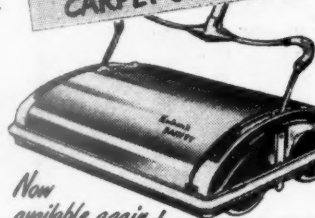
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*Now  
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*Stone Ground* WHOLEMEAL

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(P.3)



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OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM CHEMISTS

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## CHERRY HEERING

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There are few really good camera specifications to-day which do not include the Epsilon shutter. The most accurate ever made, and Ensign's special contribution to better photography.

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PRICE  
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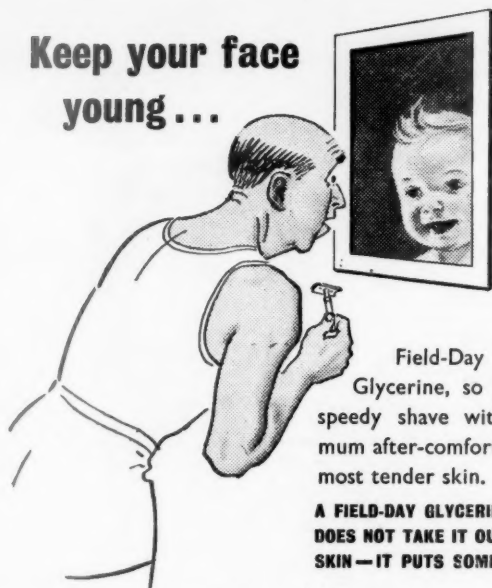
The Selfix takes 12 or  
8 pictures on standard  
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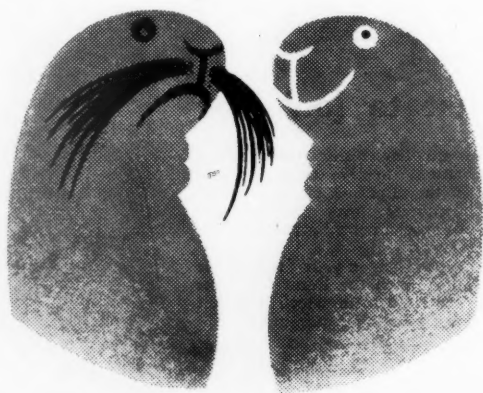


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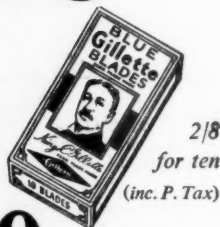


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FORD ENTERPRISE FOR BRITISH PROSPERITY



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It started in the Ford Home Guard, during the dark days of 1940; soon it was found that among the thousands who worked at Ford, Dagenham, there were enough instrumentalists to form a military band. Many of them were Kneller Hall men with first-class experience. The Company provided instruments and the music library, and soon the Ford Works Band was launched. It plays at the Works, it fulfils many public engagements, it has appeared at British Legion and A.T.C. parades, at seaside resorts; its high standard of performance has made it a popular attraction in a long series of concerts which have contributed considerably to many worthy causes. After its first broadcast, it was immediately invited to broadcast again; and it has appeared in the Lord Mayor's Show. The Ford Management believes that cultural activities are a vital factor in promoting healthy human relations in industry.

**Ford OF DAGENHAM**

CARS • VANS • TRUCKS • TRACTORS & FARM IMPLEMENTS



FORD MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED, DAGENHAM



# PUNCH

OR

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXVI No. 5650

March 23 1949

## Charivaria

THE Board of Trade now permits men's hats to be lined. But there is no sign that the Inland Revenue Department will lift a similar restriction regarding men's pockets.

A film producer recently suffered a breakdown. He could see flashbacks before his eyes.

In a letter to an evening paper a housewife blames the Government for allowing utility elastic, which breaks when stretched, to be sold to the unsuspecting public. A Snap Election seems to be indicated.



Foreigners visiting this country are entitled to free treatment under the National Health Service. The sight-testing card gives them a useful preview of phonetic spelling.

An American scientist announces that raindrops are not pear-shaped but assume all shapes. We have decided to carry on as if nothing serious had happened.

"In the second leg they reached double-top together and Mr. Garlick's first dart brought the house down."

*"The Windsor, Slough and Eton Express."*

Hit the old oak beam, Mr. Garlick?

Some people don't read the newspapers or listen to the radio. What they can't understand just now is why they are offered so many clothing coupons so cheap.



A Chicago Sunday newspaper has one hundred and eighty-four pages. One of the most popular features is a complete change of serial story each week.

"He knocked down the flag and the fans have their hats in their mouths."—Football report.

Said they'd eat them if he did it, probably.

Traffic police have come to the conclusion that the middle-aged woman is, on the whole, a careful driver. For one thing, she always does her best to keep well under thirty.

REFUSE TO PAY  
PART OF YOUR RATES

PERIODICAL WASTE  
MUST BE OVERCOME."

Notice in "Camberley News."

The Borough Treasurer to see, please.



"The trouble is," says a magistrate, "that crime does pay these days." Perhaps if the Government could be persuaded to take it over...

A B.B.C. official says that a studio audience likes to let off steam by clapping. A more realistic sound effect for letting off steam would be hissing.

A correspondent says she constantly dreams that throughout the night she is drinking large quantities of very sweet tea. What puzzles her is where she gets all the sugar from.





## My Own Simplified Spelling

*(I cannot be bothered with other people's systems, new or old. I have chosen what I liked from any source that suited me. I have tried to clarify not only pronunciation but sense. And to make things easier I have omitted punctuation, always a nuisance to children and often, no doubt, to foreigners.)*

**A**WLTHO I no how 2 and fro  
Sum peepul go with spade and ho  
And doutless have gud reason

I doo not so  
I plahnt no ro  
I neether dig nor proon nor mo  
Throo awl the singing season

If ruff winds sow  
Across the slow  
They cannot cow my glad hart now  
To werk wer well ni treason

Come with me Flo  
Thine ainshent bo  
Wair hi and lo we yoost 2 go  
Wair virelets bloom in every coom

Wair leaps from lair  
The startuld hair  
Wair springs from brake the trembling do  
Wile yet the yung yere fleas on

Wot ho dust thow  
Or I need now  
Amungst the ferze beneath the bow  
Wen brites the sun weel cair for nun  
But wonder wudlands throo

No racking coff shall keep us off  
Nor trace of winters floo

Wot not shall not  
Our troo luv twine  
In cops or grot  
Thi hand in mine  
By sum trees bole weel make our gole  
Sole speek to sole time onwud role  
And hevvn luk down benine

Wile mounts the lark  
In that hi ark  
Weel from the bark  
Cut out the names  
Of Flo and James  
With tangled harts for sine

Is life not 0 and daze 2 sh0  
Wen browze b lined with ankshus th0  
And cairs 2 closely clinging

Wot ho wot ho  
Need we to no  
Wen wites the blossom on the slo  
And meeds with joy r springing

Wot sox 2 nit  
Wen skize r lit  
And down on floury banx we sit  
With larx awl round us singing

EVOE

## A Bottle of Ink

"I WANT a bottle of ink," I said firmly.

"Certainly, miss. Black, blue, or blue-black?" he asked.

"Black," I said definitely. I wavered. "No, blue," I said. My eyes fell before his gaze. "Blue-black," I said meekly.

He brought it. It was covered with a thick layer of dust.

"Seven-and-a-half without dust, eight - and - a - half with," he said, jocularly.

I looked at it. I rather liked the dust. It made the bottle look more aristocratic—like old brandy.

"With the dust," I said.

His mouth widened. "Ha! ha! ha! ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! he! he! he! . . ." he caught the eye of the manager and

coughed. He wiped the bottle with his coat-sleeve.

"Is the top firm?" I asked.

He held the bottle upside down. A thin blue-black trickle slid down the label.

"No," he said briefly.

He screwed tighter. He held the bottle upside down. Another trickle emerged and joined the first.

"No," he said, still more briefly.

He screwed tighter. There was a sharp crack. A river joined the two trickles and together they rushed to form a sea on the counter.

"No."

He brought out another bottle. He wiped it. He held it upside down. A thin trickle . . . He put it hastily back in the farthest corner he could

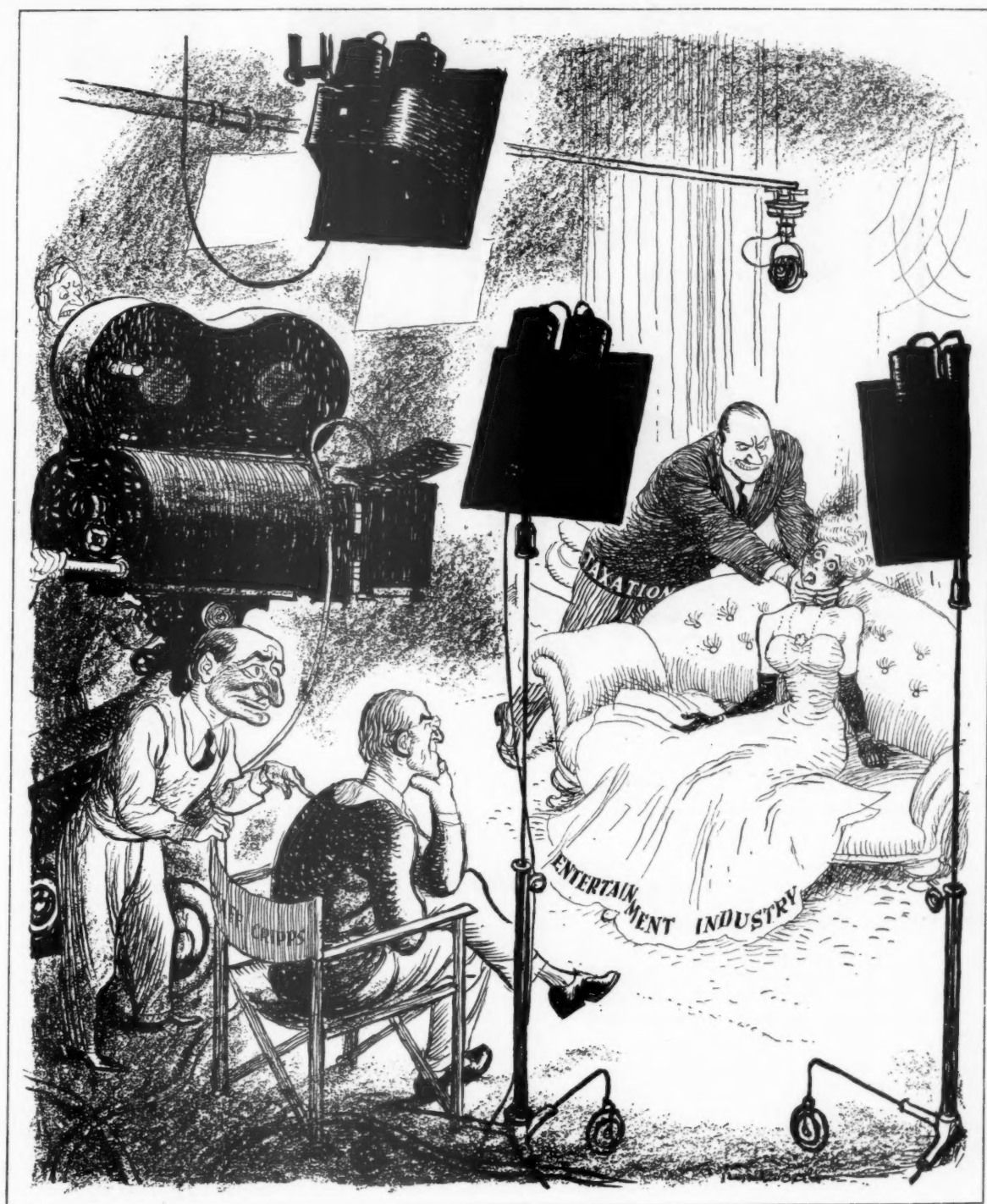
find. Likewise a second, and a third. The farthest corner began to protest and pushed its collection into the open again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wearily he held the fifty-sixth bottle upside down. And nothing happened. He shook it. And nothing happened. He banged it on the counter, grabbed my money and dived into the recesses behind the shop.

I tucked the bottle in my handbag. At the door I paused. I looked at my handbag. It must have been that final bang on the counter. I turned back.

"I want," I said firmly, "a bottle of ink eradicator . . ."



"CUT?"



*"Do you remember how annoyed you were because that funny old Chinese vase didn't quite match the dining-room curtains?"*

### *Ballade of Culinary Deficiency*

**T**HERE gleams no gem of lustre all unblurred,  
In purest gold some tiny flaws remain;  
The wise of speech are facially absurd,  
And Beauty's daughters can be just inane;  
So too with me, the Muses' favoured swain,  
The pride of Thames, and Isis' darling boast—  
There is one goal I never shall attain.  
I have no gift for scrambled eggs on toast.

What boots the careful mixture briskly stirred,  
The measured marge and salt's adjected grain?  
The secret dwells not in the printed word,  
It all depends on something in the brain.  
I put the point to housewives in the train,  
I tramp to lectures and I learn by post;  
But vain the lecturer, the postman vain:  
I have no gift for scrambled eggs on toast.

On certain nights high honour is conferred  
Upon my homely lodgment in Park Lane;  
The voice of Wit within these walls is heard,  
And Rank and Wealth hold here their dazzling  
reign.

Then do I serve some wholesome dish yet plain,  
Some artless soufflé or some easy roast?

No: I do scrambled eggs on toast again.  
I have no gift for scrambled eggs on toast.

#### *Envoi*

Prince, why so mute? O horror! you are  
slain;  
My lord has left me for a sterner host.  
I only trust your Highness felt no pain . . .  
I have no gift for scrambled eggs on toast. M. H. L.



## A West Riding Vendetta

**A**T Cleckersyke Clough tradition dies hard. But at Ormondroyd and Uggshaw's Boilerworks it dies harder than anywhere else. You can see this in all sorts of ways. Everybody knows, for instance, that most of the industrial magnates of our neighbourhood keep a mad wife, attended only by a sinister old domestic, in a remote wing of their mansions, while an efficient though garrulous housekeeper ensures the smooth running of the establishment. Old Man Ormondroyd, however, went one better. He had *two* mad wives, attended by *three* mad domestics. He also had *two* mad housekeepers. It was generally felt that a mistake had been made when ordering from the Army and Navy Stores, but the Old Man would never hear a word said against his domestic arrangements, even though the continuous groans, eldritch and other shrieks, sounds of smashing glass and whirring of electric dynamos made conversation difficult and put musical evenings out of the question. If it was a question of choosing between tradition and personal comfort the Old Man never hesitated.

A case in point was the famous Feud or Vendetta, between the two great boilermaking families of Ormondroyd and Cronkshaw, which had been carried on, it was said, from time immemorial. Authorities disagree on how this feud originated. Some say that one night late in the seventeenth century one of the Cronkshaw hands treacherously crept into the Ormondroyd works and lit a fire under a boiler without first turning the water on. In the explosion several gargoyles were blown off the parapet of "B" shed and crashed through the roof of the canteen. Another version has it that the feud started when one of the Ormondroyd sons eloped with four of Sir Jonas Cronkshaw's aunts in succession.

In actual fact, however, what happened was this. At the beginning of this century a deputation of lady novelists, headed by a Miss Edith Ratchet, visited Cleckersyke Clough and pointed out to the Old Man that in the absence of a feud between rival boilermaking families it would be literally impossible to continue writing novels—at any rate very long novels—about life in the West Riding. At first the Old Man was unwilling to admit the seriousness of the position. High words passed at the interview. Hargreaves, the popular works manager, was called in to demonstrate on the

blackboard that in the event of a conflict between Love, Honour, Vengeance and Overheads, the last word would always rest with Overheads. But in the end the novelists won their point.

"Lads," said the Old Man next morning after prayers, when we operatives were all gathered in the big Assembly Hall—"lads, I have a little surprise for you." A ripple of excitement ran through the hall, and you could have heard a boiler burst as with thunderous diapason the Old Man went on to declare that between Cronkshaw's boilerworks and ourselves a feud had existed from time immemorial. And that was that.

Now it is easy enough, as you may imagine, to announce that a feud exists. To keep it going is a more difficult matter. Not a man in either of the rival firms had any idea of what the feud was about, and in any case not many of us could remember which firm was which, or even which firm he himself belonged to—for this was long before the days of compulsory education. And there were even more serious difficulties. Old Reuben Dankshaw, for instance, even in his younger days, found it almost impossible to remember whom the feud was with, and in his later years he somehow convinced himself that it was with the Post Office. He therefore took to knocking all postmen off their bicycles at sight, and complaints, threats and summonses were all equally powerless to get the idea out of his head. To carry on a feud properly in these circumstances was a heartbreaking business, and I always thought great credit was due to the Old Man for his efforts.

Every month Miss Ratchet, a severe lady who wore a purple helmet hat and a djibbah to match, would come down from London to see how the feud was getting on. And woe betide anyone she found slacking! A rap over the knuckles from her iron-bound fountain-pen was the least you could expect. I shall never forget the sight of her chasing Josiah Heppenstall round and round the transformers one morning after she had caught him amicably playing snakes-and-ladders with one of the Cronkshaw hands. And one day, impatient at our slowness, she personally drove a blazing tram, laden with high explosives, straight through the gates of Cronkshaw's, just to set an example.

At the end of her visit she generally held a conference in the big iron-wainscoted board-room up at the

works. The Old Man and Sir Jonas Cronkshaw—they were of course on the most friendly terms—were both present and the conference seldom ended without some fiat going forth which might completely transform our daily lives. At one time, for instance, we were ordered to assume a special kind of sneering expression, very difficult to maintain, whenever we met one of the Cronkshaw hands. We had to decorate our top-hats in winter and our straw-boaters in summer with insulting messages. Prizes were given for the most convincing atrocity story of the month.

Yet in spite of the Old Man's efforts, and in spite of the impressive number of West Riding novels which swelled the British Museum Catalogue and weighed down the shelves of second-hand book-shops, the feud gradually lost impetus. And in 1926, when the last member of the Cronkshaw family died and the firm was amalgamated with Ormondroyds, many people had grave doubts whether it would be possible to keep the feud going at all. The Old Man loyally did his best, but the attempt to prosecute a feud against himself not merely made him very unhappy, but brought all boiler-production to a standstill. No one except Miss Ratchet was really sorry when the Ministry of Labour ruled that the feud was a breach of the Restrictive Practices (Industry) Act of 1937, and was therefore illegal.

"Lads," said the Old Man that same evening, his keen though bat-like eyes surveying the crowded ranks of operatives, "the feud is over. The honour of the works is vindicated. It could not but be, not, but, however—" But the rest of his speech was drowned in frenzied cheering as we operatives streamed away to a night of revelry. The Old Man had ordered all the boilers to be filled with Green Chartreuse, and the waters of Cleckersyke Clough had such intoxicating properties for days afterwards that a complaint was received from the Huddersfield Watch Committee. In his enthusiasm old Dankshaw lit a huge bonfire of registered letters, but was unable to persuade anyone to dance round it. In the end he had to dance round it himself, and went on doing so for hours, finally tripping over a spare part and falling unconscious to the ground. At midnight, when the celebrations were at their height, the Old Man was suddenly seen to shake hands with himself with an impulsive gesture. The feud was indeed over.

## Capitalism at the Zoo

WE went along to the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park the other day to check up on something that has been worrying us ever since we examined the Zoo's annual stocktaking returns a few weeks ago. It seemed to us that the publication of these figures might prove a serious blunder. The inmates, we thought, would be bound, sooner or later, to get wind of the returns, and the consequences might be decidedly ugly. After all, animals are only human.

The facts, as revealed in our analysis, are these. There are now 6,337 creatures in the Zoo and their total value stands at £89,000, or about £14 per creature. And in these days of inflation that isn't much. The Zoo authorities ought to have been satisfied with their inquiry at this stage and to have left well alone, for nobody takes umbrage at global figures and crude averages. But they weren't and didn't; they went on to particularize, to show that the mammals (827 of them, not counting, of course, the trained packs of directors, zoologists, keepers and cleaners) are worth £60,000, or about £72 a piece, that the birds (1,850 of them) are worth £22,000, or £14 each, the reptiles and amphibians (722 of them) £5,000, or about £7 each, and the 3,208 fishes only £2,000, or 12s. 6d. each. Twelve and sixpence! The animal kingdom, hitherto a classless society, has been injected with the virus of Western capitalism and split into jealous factions.

We asked an assistant keeper of reptiles whether there had been any trouble lately.

"Why, now you ask," he said, "there 'as been a bit of unrest. 'Orrible uproar a week or so back. We 'ad to double the guard."

"It's right," said a cleaner attached to the Aviary; "that Friday we had more din than the night Julian Huxley resigned the secretaryship."

"And what d'you put it down to?" we asked.

"Oh, you never knows," said the cleaner. "Could be the weather; could be the moon. More likely, though, it's the food. They're always demonstrating against Strachey or Dr. Edith. But you never knows with animals."

"You don't think," we began, "that it could have been..." But we decided that the suggestion would seem too fantastic to these two gentlemen.

We then made our tour of inspection.

On the whole the mammals seemed content. The okapi and the black African rhinoceros, with the top price

of £2,000 on their heads, were obviously enjoying their scarcity-value and listened with what we took to be amusement to the growling of the dethroned king of beasts, who is now valued at a mere £100. The tigers at £600 each looked more like tigers than we had ever seen them look, and ready to corner any market that was going. The elephants, on the other hand (if you can imagine your hand under an elephant), seemed slightly piqued—as though they knew that a value of £1,500 a piece allowed very little per lb. even if it did put them in the top bracket. Oddly enough, the white mice appeared to be perfectly satisfied with their lot. One of them sat up for us and tipped his head to one side as if to say: "One and sixpence isn't much, of course, but we do belong to the mammalian aristocracy, don't we!"

The reptiles and amphibians were clearly upset at finding themselves seeded third. George, the Mississippi alligator, who is boss of the Reptile House (at £150), and his able lieutenant the python (at £120 or about £6 per foot-squirm) are no doubt very much relieved to find their tribal pre-eminence confirmed, but they have a lot to put up with from the rest of the family. The frogs, for example, have been in a most truculent mood ever since the news leaked out that they were down in the accounts at three-pence a piece or two for fivepence ha'penny.

The monkey-eating eagle looked nothing like his £500. New furrows appeared across his brows even as we watched, and he was right off his food. From the keeper's report on his general condition it would seem that the eagle is in urgent need of a good psychiatrist. His trouble lies deep, in the dreadful realization that he is letting the side down. Every monkey consumed raises the value of those that remain and helps to keep the mammals at the top of the league table. The only really cheerful souls in the Aviary just now are the starlings, who are delighted to find themselves worth ten shillings each.

It is of course in the Aquarium that we find real despair. Even the Australian lung-fish fetches only £100, and such small fry as the guppies and gudgeons are written off at a mere 1s. 6d. each. The Aquarium reproduction committee has been in continuous session for weeks, but has not, so far, reached any definite decision about its recovery programme.

Our tour convinced us that our original surmise was correct. The apparent calm at the Zoo is deceptive. Any day now dissatisfaction will boil over into open revolt or a stay-in-strike. There is already a strong and militant underground movement.

We asked the keepers—whom we found in excellent spirits—about several other matters, about the horse, the pig, and man, and were politely referred to the Suggestions Box. Our pencilled notes are appended:

1. The common horse is rapidly becoming extinct in Britain, not so much because it is being replaced by the internal combustion engine, but because it has lately acquired a dubious reputation as a table animal. Why not ask the Ministry of Food to make an immediate donation from stock?

2. For most children the pig is nothing more than a fabulous animal in a picture-book. If the necessary permits to erect a really strong cage can be won from the Ministry of Works the pig should be given a place of honour in the Zoo. We must at all costs do right by the rising generation.

3. Man. Mr. David Garnett's story *A Man in the Zoo* told us exactly what such a life would entail. But the notice on the cage—

### *Homo Sapiens* MAN

This specimen, born in Scotland, was presented to the Society by John Cromarthe, Esq. Visitors are requested not to irritate the Man by personal remarks

—contained nothing about the Man's value. If the authorities decide—in view of the present world situation—to include Man in this collection we would urge them to select their exhibit from the ranks of the professional footballers or the dentists.

Posterity should be left in no doubt about Man's leadership of the animal world. Hod.

### Drift

WHEN a new type of clock was introduced at Greenwich a few years ago, improving the margin of error of the wireless "pips" from one-hundredth to one-thousandth of a second, I hailed it at once as an important contribution to the more perfect life. It appears, however, that this in turn will shortly be replaced by a still newer method of time-keeping, American in origin, which has for its basis the almost unbelievably

constant rhythm in which the atoms vibrate inside a molecule of ammonia. I confess it would never have occurred to me to build a clock on this principle. But wiser heads than mine—or yours, reader—have used it to construct one which would regard a lapse of a thousandth of a second as a colossal blunder.

When I first read about it I am bound to say I felt thoroughly lukewarm. The idea of an atomic clock at my bedside bored me indescribably. I had for years gone about utterly happy in the knowledge that even if my watch happened to lose two or three thousandths of a second during the day I could always put it right at nine o'clock. More than this I did not want. But one arresting word in the newspaper account of the invention was enough to bring me to my senses. The part actually played by the molecule of ammonia, I read, was to stand by an ordinary crystal oscillator and guard its timekeeping against drift.

There is a great moral principle embedded here. Beware of drift! Guard against drift! Which of us is impervious to its subtle advances? Who can afford to ignore it? I dare say even Sir Stafford Cripps has to watch himself closely every morning for the first, perhaps almost imperceptible, sign of drift.

A simple illustration will show how easily the disease can lead us astray. I have to rise promptly every morning at one and a half minutes past seven; an elaborate series of experiments extending over several years has shown me that I can just afford to switch on my wireless and hear the "headlines" of the news before I get out of bed. If a headstrong announcer so far forgets himself as to indulge in banner headlines two minutes long my day is ruined. It might have been supposed that a slight delay at this early hour could easily be corrected later in the day. But it is not so. Let me rise even *one second* late and drift immediately sets in. I know it well. By the time I arrive at the breakfast-table the one second has grown into ten; I am a minute late at my desk; and by lunch-time I have either lost ten minutes' work or my lunch is cold.

What I have been describing is the drift (of course quite unforgivable) of one particular person. But now imagine the chaotic effect if drift attacks *the clock itself*. Suppose that my watch loses a thousandth of a second—as it may well do under the present crude methods used by Greenwich and the B.B.C.—every morning for three years. Imagine that I have



"And believe me, gents, you've a bargain 'ere for ten thousand pounds."

no molecule of ammonia by me for protection. (If I had I doubt whether I should know what to do with it.) And where am I? *More than a whole second behind!* And if that does not appal you, reader, reflect that during that second the earth has travelled over eighteen miles in its journey round the sun. Indeed, during that same second London has moved no less than three hundred yards by virtue of the spin of the earth alone!

This is a sobering thought. It has quite sobered me, and unless you are very far gone it will sober you. How comforting to remember that in future a splendid little molecule of ammonia will stand by to guard us from this yawning gulf!

And yet—now that we are alive to

the danger—can we be sure that even a molecule of ammonia is enough? Might it not get lost, or neutralized? We may presume it free from drift—but what about the scientist who looks after it? From now on I trust neither man nor molecule. I shall use whatever device my natural genius suggests to check these new clocks, whatever their principle. And if ever I detect an error of even a hundred thousandth of a second in those pips I'll make them squeak!

#### Mot Juste

"Mrs. P— . . . had pleaded guilty to obtaining and possessing a total of 40 oz. of opium and other drugs (18,000 doses)." *Glasgow paper.*



## On Immaculacy in the Aspect of Food and Drink

### A Sort of Miniature Ode

**O** SEE the machine-cut potato-chip ripple  
In regular waves like a galvanized roof!  
How specklessly clear that superlative tippie  
The crystalline usquebaugh (88 proof)!

What feats of contrivance went into the shaping  
Of standardized pear-drops! How splendid to sniff  
The pure amyl-acetate fragrance escaping  
As each little pellet contributes its whiff!

Behind the lunch-counter the waiters are waitin';  
And next to the turnip so orderly diced,  
Dark, shiny and smooth as a typewriter-platen  
Cylindrical sausage is ripe to be sliced.

Observe all that cheese in identical wedges!  
Observe the Gruyère, its symmetrical holes!  
How true are the lines of that sugar-cube's edges!  
How flat is the butter! How round are the rolls!

Viridian peas equidistant are dotted  
With plugs of new carrot, each neat as a cork,  
And petals of chicken-breast trimly allotted  
Round discs of close-textured American pork.

I venture to hope that you do grasp my meaning:  
How tidy the food, how pellucid the wine.  
But note the corollary now supervening—  
It doesn't take long to deface the design.

R. M.

## Leisure

**L**EISURE may be divided into organized and unorganized activities, which gives us on the one hand football matches and on the other toffee-making and not getting up in the morning. Having mentioned sport, and since it is impossible for the most aggressively unsporting to ignore this side of life except to impress others, I think we might start with some of the better-known kinds. Football is in itself two kinds of sport, one a maze of technically-caused interruptions and the other the natural result of two teams each wanting the ball to go their way. The first kind is watched by experts, and novices on tow, the second by people largely composed of humour and decibels; but both audiences have points in common, like putting all their moral calories at the disposal of one side and having a fine view of where the daylight goes on a winter afternoon. It must not be forgotten that football matches may be played as well as watched for leisure, if that is the right word for all that rushing about; but because it applies so much better to golf and cricket I think we might go on to these two games and consider what we all know about them.

**A** GOLFER is a person who owns a bag of golf-clubs and wears a zipped-up jacket called a lot of different names like windcheater to remind its wearers how warm they will be when they have been inside long enough to warm it up. A golf-jacket has many other uses and so spends much time being looked for; it is easy to lose because it is enough of a jacket to get hung in cupboards and enough of a

macintosh to disappear under the clutter on the coat-pegs. When a bag of golf-clubs is not in use it is inclined to lean against walls under macintoshes, rattling when life approaches. Both golf-jackets and golf-bags have pockets tending to contain little pegs which are interesting, apart from being progress, for favouring the same range of colours as halma-pieces.

So much for the equipment. The game, as absolutely everyone knows, consists of using the most premeditated force to hit the ball forward, diagonally or not at all; it is a long game (another point in common with halma) which includes nice scenery as does no other game, certainly not halma, and there is as sharp a division between those who are bad at it and those who don't play as anywhere in the world of sport, by which I mean that sensible people don't play any games they can't except when they begin.

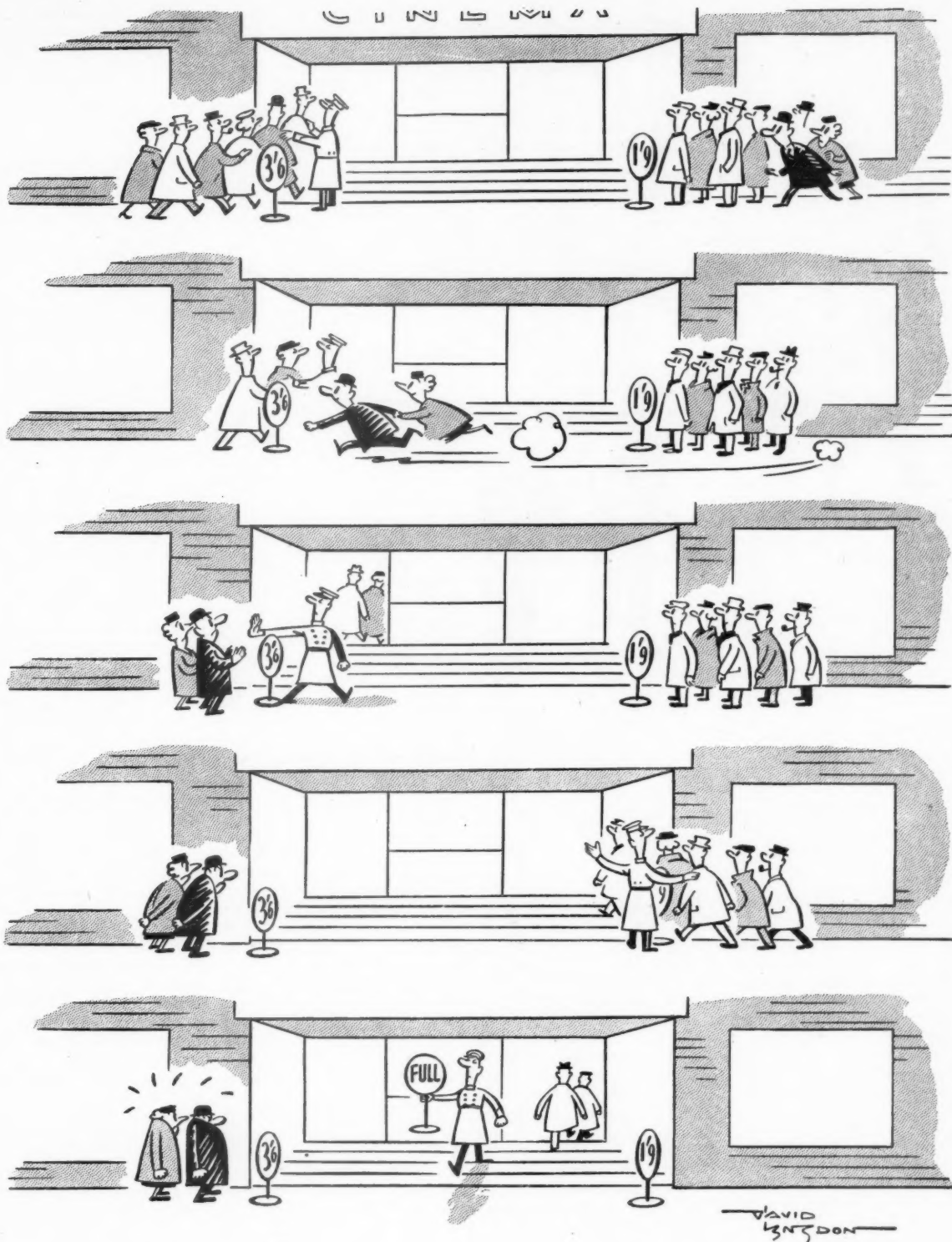
I have said nothing yet about cricket, which is the opposite of football both when played and when watched; the spectators keep fairly quiet and often sit in deck-chairs or on macintoshes having their tea, while most of the players have a lot of spare time to fill by looking ready for anything. Cricket is, indeed, leisure in more senses than the one which qualifies it for this article, and details like the way batsmen prod and hammer before settling down as targets would take me right off the point, which is how people spend their free time.

**L**EISURE does not, of course, consist merely of doing the things we want to; a nagging statement more than justified by real life, for my readers would be the first to admit that they fill in their free time with an enormous variety of jobs. Some write letters, some paint lamp-stands different colours—I mean different from what they were—while some make things from planks, and many do all these jobs in turn, with innumerable others thrown in. Letter-writing is a universal activity worth looking at for a moment from the outside, for people who do it can so obviously be doing nothing else unless they are typing out of sight. Those who write by hand at desks and on the arms of chairs have a special technique of stopping to look ahead, of turning the paper briskly, of reading the result carefully at high speed and of collecting messages from bystanders.

Again looking on from the outside, we may observe lamp-painters as careful spreaders of newspaper, inevitable droppers of at least one blob of paint which must be dealt with, and proud commentators on their own handiwork. Home carpenters—it must be remembered that they are dealing with the curling, resinous planks of the modern world—are initially gloomy people believed to be in need of some rather chirpy encouragement and always about not to have enough brackets to finish. I must say something too about the hemming of carpets, for this is a job very few indeed of my readers know anything about, and that is a pity because only those who have given up an evening to it, along with anyone else in the room, know how pleasant any other job seems to people sewing just off the floor at a yard an hour.

**T**HE only other leisure activity I have space for is the one consisting of rooting round junk-shops. This is a process which as many people as shopkeepers would expect begin by asking for something they don't think is there, and end with a promise to be back again—this is supposed to cheer the shopkeeper up—with the interval filled by what can only be described as peering appreciatively and by asking questions which display some very subtle shades of cultured ignorance.

ANDE.





*"You're in luck, sir. A table has just this moment become vacant."*

## Life in Darkest Surrey

**A**S crimes go, it was small. Small, but with an element of the bizarre which lifted it above most of the crimes one tries not to read about in the papers. Also, it was motiveless. It was plain silly.

I was the first up that morning, I cannot remember why, and as I peered out across the common to see if it was to be another case for an umbrella I saw that evil had been abroad during the night. The front garden, carved out of the common by a previous owner long enough ago for time to have sanctified the enterprise, is bounded by a picket fence, and parts of this, I realized, were missing. The pickets lay in confused heaps on the verge of the

lane, like white spillikins, and little heaps of yellow powder showed where the death-watch beetle and other members of the underground had been surprised.

This was the first time the postman had found me kneeling in the lane in my pyjamas, and he seemed anxious to humour me. "A lovely morning," he said, shivering in his greatcoat, "for puttin' things to rights."

I explained we were the victims of an outrage, of one of those blind, purposeless acts of vandalism which scar the chequered progress of man. Relief spread slowly across his large red face, and he dropped to his knees beside me.

"Summun in rubber gloves, no doubt," he declared. "That be the way they set about it. And the ground too frozen-like for footprints. If we could come on a trouser-button now, or a lock of hair!"

"Or a piece of cake with a phone number iced on it," I snarled, my teeth chattering.

"Arrh, happen the first clue and it's wunnerful what comes after. Seen any dark men around, last few days?"

"Only the gipsies down by the pond, and they're friends."

"No furrin women out in the gorse with spy-glasses?"

"You read too much, Carbury," I said, taking a circular for fish-manure from him and going back into the house . . .

I was so cold that when I dropped into a hot bath the water hissed at me. I lay down in it and searched my conscience for an enemy, but I live a guileless life and am much respected. A few days before, I recalled, I'd spoken perhaps rather brutally to a small boy picking snowdrops in the orchard, but it was hard to believe he'd bother to come back in the middle of the night to mess up an old fence . . .

"You know what it is?" cried Miss Carruthers, passing after breakfast on her way to shop. "It's an ape, and a pretty big one too. If my brother Herbert were here he could probably tell us the exact sort, but he's in Bulawayo, of course, so that's that. Just the kind of thing they delight in. I expect it's under the dining-room table now, planning its next move. You must go about in couples, and ring up the Zoo . . ."

At breakfast there had been three schools of thought. One held I should sit up all night with a shot-gun, since malefactors were said to return to the scene of the crime and a good deal of fence remained to smash. This sounded fine and manly, but it seemed to me that to do so without one's solicitor sitting up beside one was asking for trouble in the courts. Another put the whole business down to poltergeists, but as this was clearly due to the fact that Harry Price's book on Borley Rectory had strayed into the nursery we ignored it. The third urged it was a shame to keep the police out of an affair baffling enough to disrupt the hideous alternation of rearlights and dog-licences. There was something in this, and yet I had a hunch to wait . . .

"Been expectin' somethin' like it for a long time," exclaimed Colonel Pelmett, leaning hungrily out of his palaeolithic motor-car. "Dam fellers are everywhere. Now Moscow's said the word, and nothing will be safe."



"Who do you think told Moscow about my fence?" I asked, because I honestly wanted to know.

"It's property, isn't it?"

"It was," I said . . .

At lunch I grew melancholy that such a nice world could house such nasty people. It was very sad, and I felt it keenly and personally. I was just swallowing the end of a jam roll and agreeing to call in the police when a slight sound of splintering caught my ear. Out in the lane stood a small pony, an almost circular pony with a length of rope and a stake dragging behind it. It was scratching its chin thoughtfully on the top of the fence, and at each forceful stroke another of the uprights came away with a clatter . . .

The gipsies were all out when I reached the pond, except the boss. He was about eighty, or it may have been a hundred and two, and he sat staring regretfully into space, making quite beautiful clothes-pegs by a bright fire. I felt I was visiting a sultan, and that a couple of goats or a bag of rubies would have been in order. He accepted tobacco, however, with a good grace, and when his pipe was alight began to tell me toothlessly of how his eldest daughter had married into the fried-fish business in Huddersfield. It appeared to be many years since she had committed this intolerable folly, but it rankled freshly in the old man's mind. I sat down on the steps of the caravan . . .

When the postman came back at tea-time, bringing a circular for a new painless sort of biscuit, he was surprised to find two sturdy young gipsies banging nails into the fence.

"Happen you ain't caught him?" he shouted.

"He's caught," I said. "And there's a rope round his neck." ERIC.

## Ignorance

MUMMY! Mummy, do you know what Grannie thought; do you know what she didn't know? What she didn't know about my train?

Mummy, did you know when you were out Grannie gave Christopher and me a prize for being good while you were out, to buy what we liked with, not to save if we didn't want, and I got some more rails? *Rails*, Mummy, and they only had *two* curves but in the window there was a box called Everything Sixpence and it had a rather old one and I just happened to see it sticking up only it had a broken end so it had to have a match-stick. Well,

you know the *end*, Mummy, where it sticks out and has to join on to the other one and there are *two* bits that stick out, well, there was only one because it wasn't new, and it had to have a match-stick.

Christopher got a new battery for his Morse-code buzzer, and when he went to show it to Martin, Hilary came and saw my rails, and with the old ones it was enough for *two* loops, and she brought some points of Martin's only he didn't know, so we had *two* points. Only she isn't very good at points, Mummy, not like I am; nearly always she forgot to hold the rail down and it came up and was an accident, or if she remembered to hold the rail down she sat on the piece of rail behind and it came apart and there was an accident *there*, and Grannie said when she saw us she wondered how they ever managed at Clapham Junction. Mummy, what's Clapham Junction? What is it? *Why* did Grannie wonder how they managed? I mean why did she wonder when she saw us, how they managed at *Clapham Junction*?

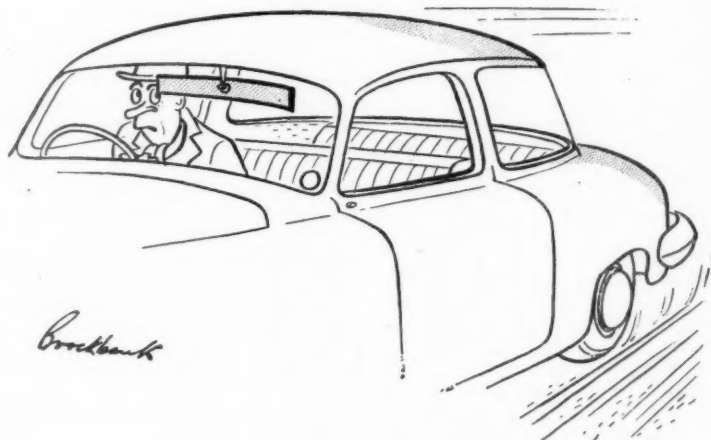
Mummy, Christopher and Martin came back and we made a different shape of loop, and Martin saw his points that we had so he said they had to play with us if they wanted to, and they put the buzzer on the line, so that when the train ran over one special place, the buzzer buzzed. Mummy, it *buzzed*! Grannie said she didn't know *how* we thought of things. Mummy, wasn't it smashing, to *buzz*? We had it for a fog signal. And when Christopher had just said it was a very thick fog, wait for the buzz, Hilary sat backwards on the line *again*, Mummy, on the new sort of loop we had, and the rail came undone, it was the one with the match-stick, and it was only the engine we had that time, and it

went right off the rail and across the floor and under the umbrella-stand. Mummy, the *umbrella-stand*! Well, it was where we had the lines, just inside the front door—no, I don't think anyone came, except Miss Fisk came and one or two other people might have come, I don't remember, but they all stepped across all right. Mummy, wasn't it super, running *under the umbrella-stand*? Mummy, suppose a train came off the line really—charging down the hill and up the road and right through the garden, whistling and roaring—well, I only said *suppose*, and I don't suppose it will, do you?

Mummy, Grannie doesn't really understand *anything* about trains: do you know what she thought? Well, what she thought was, she thought the thing you hook the tender on to was the brake. Mummy, the *brake*! We all laughed so much when she thought it was the brake, Hilary fell right over backwards and made a *very bad* accident, *all* the line came apart. Mummy, she's so old, Grannie, I mean, you'd think she'd have found out by this time about where the tender joins on and where the brake is, wouldn't you? I mean, to think where the tender joins on is the *brake*: well, you don't know much about engines but I shouldn't think you'd think it was the brake where the tender joins on, Mummy, would you—I mean how could it be the *brake*, where all it is is the tender *joining on*, Mummy, how could it?

## Asking for It

"Senior Reporter wanted . . . Knowledge of English an advantage; good salary." Advt. in "World's Press News."





"Next."

## South of Vera Cruz

"BUT why not Coatzacoalcos?" demanded Hemingway. "Isn't that the obvious port to use?"

"All I know," replied Burwash wearily, "is what it says in the cable. Read it for yourself."

We all clustered round Hemingway's desk and tried to read the cable over his shoulder. After his teacup had been broken and a bottle of red ink upset on to the carpet he stood on his chair and announced with some emotion that to avoid the total destruction of his office he would read the message aloud. It was from a firm of ship-brokers in New York, and it ran: "HAVE FIRM ORDER TWO HUNDRED COMBINE HARVESTERS EX LIVERPOOL DELIVERY ANY MEXICAN PORT SOUTH OF VERA CRUZ EXCEPT COATZACOALCOS STOP CAN YOU OFFER US A SHIP STOP REPLY URGENTLY."

"The *Gurgleheim* could carry that cargo," said Whelkstone, taking out a cigarette.

"Quite so," said Burwash, helping himself from Whelkstone's cigarette-case before the latter had time to get it shut. "And would you mind telling me how you would propose to take the *Gurgleheim*, drawing twenty-six feet of water, into Laguna de Terminos?"

"Where's Laguna de Terminos?" asked Hemingway.

"The next port south of Vera Cruz," replied Burwash.

I had by now got hold of the *Shipping World Year Book*, and I read out what it said about Laguna de Terminos. "'Vessels with a keel'—has the *Gurgleheim* got a keel?"

"A sort of rudimentary one, I think," said Hemingway doubtfully. "It's a part of the ship you don't see

in the ordinary way," he added defensively.

"Vessels with a keel can get over the bar with thirteen feet at certain times of the year. Mud bottom."

There was a short pause.

"Well," said Hemingway, breaking the silence, "even at the right time of year I think the *Gurgleheim* would get a bit muddy. But there must be some other ports. I mean, Mexico's a big place. Let's have a look at the atlas."

By now even Eustace Platfoot, who shares Hemingway's office, had put down *The Times* crossword and begun to take an interest in what was going on; and it was Eustace who unearthed the atlas from under a mound of old copies of *Lloyd's List*. We all helped him to find Mexico.

"Well, it needed rebinding anyway," said Burwash, "and you can patch up the Caribbean Sea with a piece of transparent mending-tape. Here's Coatzacoalcos, where it says 'Puerto Mexico' (they're always changing the names of these places), and here's Laguna de Terminos. Now, the next port down the coast's Campeche."

The year-book said about Campeche that vessels drawing ten feet could approach to within one mile of the coast.

"And then I suppose you throw the combine harvesters ashore," said Hemingway. "What do they want with combine harvesters in Mexico, anyway? I thought they only grew coffee."

"The principal agricultural crops," quoted Whelkstone, who had got hold of *Whitaker's Almanack*, all the strictly marine works of reference having already been seized by his more nimble colleagues, "are sugar, beans, Chile-pepper, vanilla—"

"It'll be for harvesting the Chile-pepper, I suppose," said Burwash. "The only other port I can see is Progreso. What does the year-book say about Progreso, Dagwood?"

"There doesn't seem to be anything between Great Popo and Puerto Cortes," I said, turning the leaves. "Oh, I see—there's two pages stuck together. Prince Rupert, Probolingo, Progreso—here we are. 'New pier to leeward of Fiscal Wharf with intermittent red light on end.' That doesn't seem to help us very much. 'Captain of the Port and Inspector of Light-houses, Ignacio Gonzalez S.'"

"Gonzalez S. what?" demanded Hemingway.

"Just Gonzalez S. See for yourself if you don't believe me."

Hemingway took the book from me and began reading it.

"This isn't getting us anywhere," said Burwash. "The cablegram says 'Reply urgently.' At this very moment some enterprising Panamanian ship-owner may be snatching the business from under our noses. Why the blazes can't we use Coatzacoalcos? Turn it up in the book, Hemingway, will you?"

Hemingway, who was sitting cross-legged on top of the safe, looked up from the page he had been reading. "You know, I never realized what a mine of information this book is," he said. "I see that at Puerto Ponce they have a thing called a Municipal Bulkhead, 1,809 feet long. Or take Quelimane, in Portuguese East Africa: 'Harbour Master, Lieut. João Alberto Costa Soares Perdigão. Bar said to be improving.' Whereas at Pugwash, N.S.—Oh, very well. Coatzacoalcos—let me see. Cienfuegos, Ciudad Bolívar—here it is. 'Depth at the quays, 28 feet.' That would do very nicely, wouldn't it? 'Customs Agents, Manuel Candanedo, Tomas Ruiz and Javier Anaya.' They sound like three pretty tough hombres. Perhaps Javier Anaya's clapped a stiff duty on combine harvesters."

"Well, the cable's clear enough," said Burwash. "We can't use Coatzacoalcos, and there's no other port the *Gurgleheim* could get into. It looks as though we'll have to give in. Pass me a telegraph-form, somebody."

The telephone rang as Burwash was scribbling, and I picked it up. "Broadside Shipping Company," I said.

"This is the Eastern Union Cable office," said a detached feminine voice. "I have a correction to the cable you received from New York. Shall I read it to you?"

"Please do," I said, glancing over my shoulder at Burwash, who was biting the nails of his disengaged hand.

as he wrote out our refusal of the proffered voyage.

"For 'except Coatzacoalcas,'" said the girl, "read 'suggest Coatzacoalcas.' I beg your pardon?"

"Just a minute," I said. "I'll put you on to Mr. Burwash. He's the man you want."

\* \* \* \* \*  
The *Gurgenheim* made a very successful voyage, though when her Captain came to see us on his return he had to confess that he had failed to obtain a signed photograph of Javier Anaya, Tomas Ruiz and Manuel Candanedo. But he brought us some excellent Chile peppers. G. D. R. D.

## Romantic Painting

**V**OGUES in Art are hardly less arbitrary than vogues in dress. Ten years ago the newly-formed Euston Road Group excited attention; to-day it is the turn of our Romantic artists, who include such discussed painters as Graham Sutherland, John Piper and John Minton.

But just as the New Look is in reality an Old Look revived, so of course our latter-day Romanticism is only a manifestation of the movement which began in England in the second half of the eighteenth century. To demonstrate this is, indeed, the purpose of an interesting exhibition called "Aspects of British Romanticism" at Roland, Browne & Delbanco's in Cork Street.

Though Romanticism has been so freely interpreted as to allow the admission of Reynolds' "Cupid"—a perfectly normal and enchanting sprite—there does exist a thread (tenuous though it sometimes is) which links almost all these thirty paintings of different periods, and allows one to consider the collection as so many expressions of a heightened, emotional state of mind. In the first room, dominated by Phillip de Loutherbourg's "Shipwreck"—a work of original vision and dramatic power, painted at the close of the eighteenth century—one discovers also a mythical painting by Watts conceived in a mood of wistful fantasy, and an imaginative Burne-Jones Group whose rhythm is wonderfully repeated in the landscape background.

In the room above one's eye alights on a couple of little panels full of the wild Irish poetry of Jack Yeats, a romantic vision of Snowdon, by John Piper, and a rare Provençal landscape by Innes. I commend the exhibition to all who are concerned to trace the antecedents of the current Romantic revival in England. N. A. D. W.

## Goosey

(Vide Press Report)

**A** GOOSE, no doubt to your surprise,  
Inspires my song to-day,  
A lowly thing and far from wise  
You, at first go, would say,  
And yet for SARAH—that's her name—  
The poet should in justice frame  
A lordlier kind of lay.

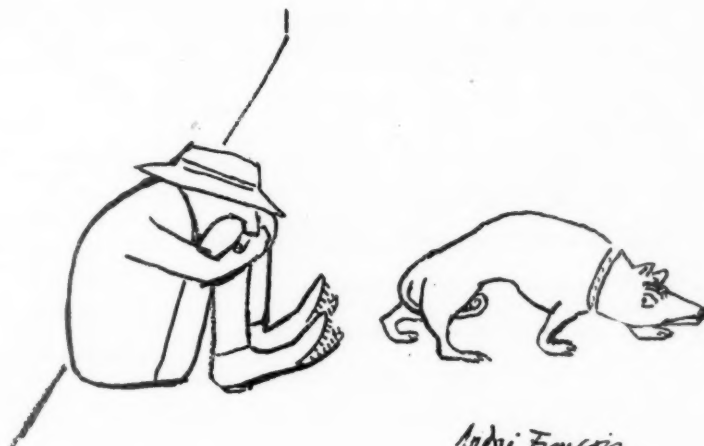
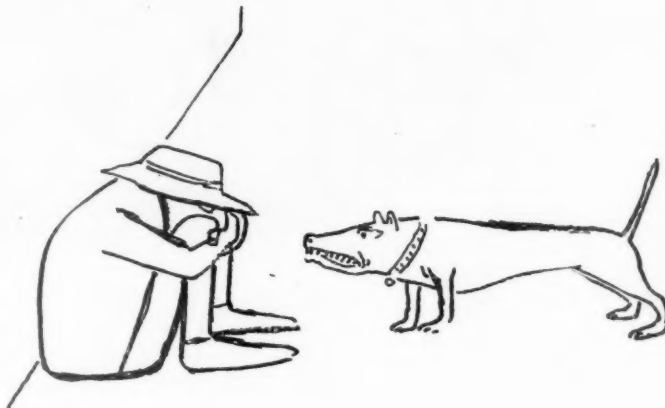
Her tale of years is forty-four.  
This, you must needs allow,  
Is rarity to say no more,  
And if you ask me how  
She lived that lengthy span in peace  
Saved from the common fate of geese  
I couldn't say just now.

In eggs—you'll marvel much hereat—  
She passed the grand amount  
Of full one thousand; after that  
Nobody seemed to count;

Of goslings, or the records err,  
Three hundred odd confessed in her  
What one may term their fount.

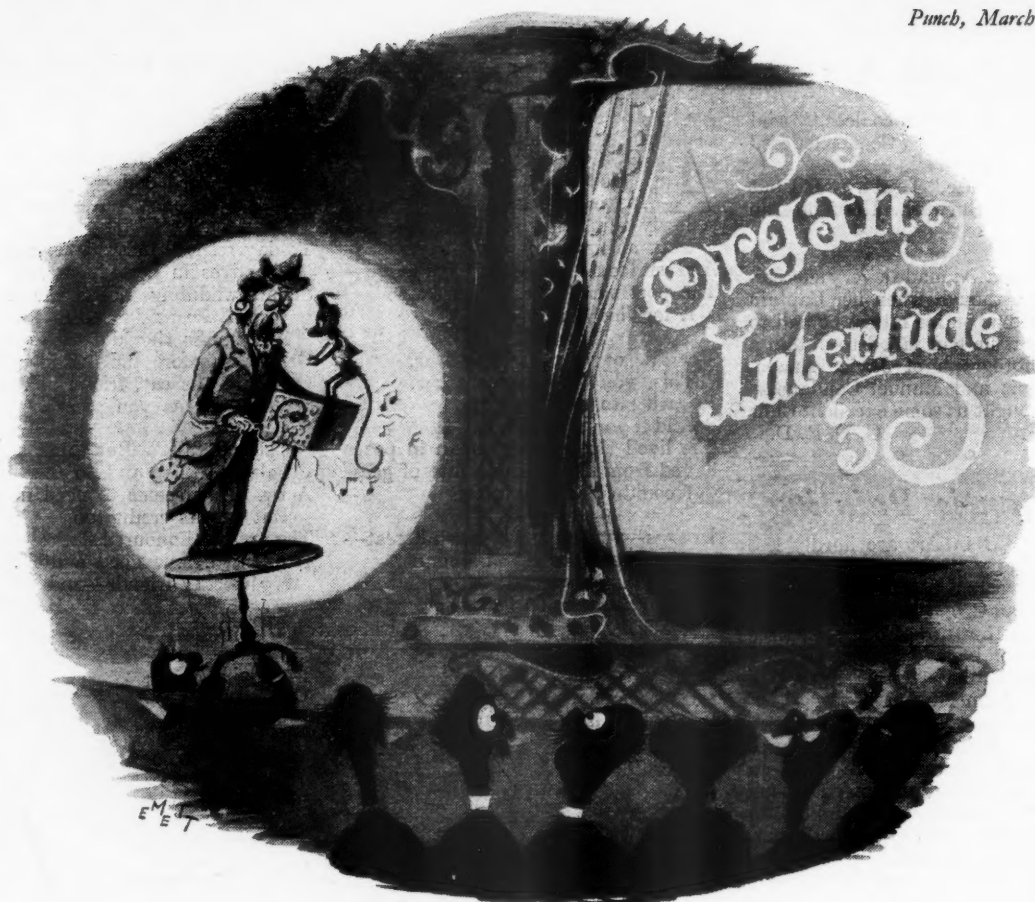
To-day retired, industrious one,  
She lives in petted ease,  
Strolls waddling 'neath the noonday sun  
And snuffs the idle breeze,  
Or basks before the ingle-log  
One with the cat, friend of the dog,  
As casual as you please.

"A simple tale." But think again.  
Calmly to live and do  
A task that seems to need no brain  
But has its credit too,  
Then rest in honoured sloth: 'twould be  
How good, how good a life for me.  
My worthy friends—and you?  
DUM-DUM.



André François





*"Yes, I read that the film people were having to cut down expenses a bit."*

### *Hot Towel, Please.*

**B**ARBER, let your snowy dust-sheet like a Roman toga drape this poor frame, and make it manly; swathe away the shambling ape and reveal the Claudian emperor, if unlaurelled, anyhow bald on top, and—ah—imperial at the temples and the brow.

Cense the steaming towel, barber, then in lordly comfort mask nose and chin and eagle eyebrows; do not hurry o'er your task: let the warmth seep through my system slowly, slowly. I am wax, just a face to be re-modelled; but my muscles must relax.

When you whip away the towel, barber, foam the brush with soap—lay the lather on with leisure . . . we have ample time, I hope? In this wicked world, O barber, there is stress and strain and rush, but an artist should despise them, working with his shaving-brush.

There are faces in the mirror. If I choose to ope my eyes I can see them gazing at me full of hatred and surmise—shadows, foolish shadows, barber, on the walls of Plato's cave: was I once a shadow with them? Shave away, good barber, shave.

Queues and work and cares and worries: can they, in some sort, exist as a queer, amusing theory in this world extensionalist? (Mind the upper lip, there, barber.) Do I sleep, or do I not? Let the second towel, barber, be, beyond all question, hot.

This is wanton, wicked luxury, barber (not the oil, the cream). Oh, massage my features gently; do not wake me from my dream: Bring the third hot towel, swiftly, lap it snugly, fold on fold—

\* \* \* \* \*  
But the fiend is in all barbers, for the third one's always cold.  
R. C. S.



**PATIENCE, PLEASE.**

"If he's content with a vegetable love which would certainly not suit *me*  
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be!"

[Sunflowers are to be sown in rotation with groundnuts in East Africa.]

# MONDAY, March 14th.

—The House of Commons was definitely in One of its Moods. There was a liverish (or Mondayish) atmosphere over everything, and a jumpiness that meant a scene or two, either to-day or (as Commons Moods are often delayed-action affairs) to-morrow. Or possibly both.

And it all started so quietly. Mr. Speaker took the Chair to general cheers of welcome on his return to his duties after a bout of 'flu, and he briefly thanked the House. But a moment later Mr. HECTOR McNEIL, the Minister of State, used the word "gifted" in relation to the transfer of a British warship to the Chinese Government. There was something like a snarl of rage from the benches opposite, which caused Mr. McNEIL first to pause and then to repeat the word with defiant emphasis.

Then it was his own turn to be snappy, and his victim was Sir WALDRON SMITHERS, who got into an involved misunderstanding about (of all things) German cigars. He complained that in its present economic state Germany should not spend dollars on cigars, and Mr. McNEIL explained, with warmth, that no dollars were involved, since both the tobacco leaf and the cigars were "made in Germany." He said it so acidly that Sir WALDRON, with tears in his voice, exclaimed: "There is no need for the Minister to get cross!"

Mr. RUPERT DE LA BÈRE exclaimed "Everything is wrong with this Government!" To which a Labour Member retorted swiftly "Except the by-elections!"

Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL conjured up visions of real-life Picasso pigs when she spoke of animals being "ear-tattooed at the centre"—but it turned out that the "centre" referred to was some agricultural collection office. It was a shock to hear Dr. EDITH say a little later: "I never claim to be infallible," and there were gallant (or ironic) cries of dissent.

Then, its Mood changing again, the House went all metaphorical and covered itself with jargon. There was talk of "measuring fences before they were jumped," of a "milk gallonage target," of "the expansion of the present target," which brought purist Mr. HARRY STRAUSS to his feet in pained protest. But such dragon-phrases are not easy to slay, and the protest went unheeded.

And then Mr. HAROLD WILSON, President of the Board of Trade, made

## Impressions of Parliament

Monday, March 14th.—House of Commons: Farewell to Coupons—and Storm Over Peanuts.

Tuesday, March 15th.—House of Commons: Analgesia.

Wednesday, March 16th.—House of Commons: Houses.

Thursday, March 17th.—House of Commons: Coke, Petrol—and Meat.

a statement. Rising eagerly, he said he had made an order completely ending the clothes-rationing system, from to-morrow.

There was a roar of approving cheers from the Government side, and a roar of bitter laughter and ironic comment from the Opposition. Tory Members reminded the Minister, at the tops of their voices, that voting in the by-election in Sowerby was due on Wednesday—and they clearly implied that the juxtaposition of the two events was not what authors and film-scenario writers call "purely coincidental." Waiting patiently for relative



Awll

### Impressions of Parliamentarians

77. Mr. H. G. Strauss  
(English Universities)

quiet, Mr. WILSON announced that there would be no sudden plenty and that prices would remain high.

Mr. OLIVER STANLEY congratulated the Minister on "making up his mind in time for Wednesday," and the Minister retorted hotly that the Government fought its by-elections on policy and did not need stunts. A few Tories reminded him, fortissimo and in chorus, that the derationing of sweets had been announced forty-eight hours before the recent South Hammersmith by-election—which seemed to the interjectors to be stretching Coincidence's Long Arm rather cruelly.

By now some of the Government's supporters were having second thoughts about the announcement, and they began to ask questions suggesting that high prices were to be used as a means of concealed rationing. Mr. WILSON shook his head.

Mr. ELLIS SMITH asked leave to raise a point of order, which Mr. Speaker ruled must be kept "hypothetical." It appeared that some noble Lord, in "another place," had said something about someone who was a Member of the House of Commons. Was this right, was this fair? asked Mr. ELLIS SMITH, his voice shaking with anger. Mr. Speaker replied that, right or wrong, fair or unfair, nothing could be done about it, since both Houses were equal and neither could overrule the other.

After that a stormy debate over the East African groundnut scheme seemed almost like a sewing-meeting for particularly gentle old ladies. And this in spite of the fact that Mr. JOHN STRACHEY, the Food Minister, was at his provocative best, flicking at the Opposition, the Press, the rest of the world, for their effrontery in complaining about his groundnut scheme. He said airily that it had cost £20 millions, and would eventually cost twice as much, at least, as had been estimated. But it might also yield twice as much as had been estimated.

Mr. ROB HUDSON, who has just come back from the "Peanut Belt," seemed to doubt whether there would be any groundnuts to show for the millions spent, and he said so very sternly.

TUESDAY, March 15th.—Talk about Moods! Captain PETER THORNEYCROFT, who had secured a Second Reading for his Bill to make analgesia in childbirth more readily available, asked the Minister of Health, Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN, for a statement. Mr. BEVAN said the Government's own plans already provided for the service advocated by Captain THORNEYCROFT.

Captain THORNEYCROFT promptly said he would press his Bill until every mother had the service and was relieved of pain as of right. The Minister, pained, flared up and said "some Members" were more anxious for publicity than to relieve pain. This caused uproar, and Mr. BEVAN was just heard to add that the Opposition was making human suffering a political stunt.

A tornado of cries of "Withdraw!"





"The bear will rapidly become extinct if they abolish baiting."

and "Shame!" swept the House, but Mr. Speaker ruled that it was not possible to move the adjournment and have a debate on the issue.

The debate on the Air Estimates that followed was by comparison a somnolent affair, although Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON, the Air Minister, had a thrilling enough story to tell about the R.A.F.'s efforts in the Berlin air-lift and in other directions, and he told it very well.

The Opposition's chief complaint was that there was too much secrecy about the size and efficiency of the Royal Air Force—and not enough imagination in presenting it to the public.

In the end the Air Estimates were approved.

**WEDNESDAY, March 16th.**—Keen observers thought they noted a slightly chastened air about Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN when he presented his Housing Bill to-day. If so, it was probably due to the fact that his attack on Captain THORNEYCROFT had been met by three hundred and fifty-two Members signing a demand for the passing of the Captain's Bill. This is more than half the total membership, so things may yet happen.

But Mr. BEVAN had an encouraging

story to tell about housing progress. He said, for instance, that we were now within sight of providing a separate household for every family. Colonel WALTER ELLIOT, when he came to speak, said this was "nonsense." Mr. BEVAN said there were more homes now, in relation to the population, than there were in 1939. Colonel ELLIOT said the Minister's claims were optimistic ones not borne out by M.P.'s postbags or experience in their constituencies.

The Bill empowers local authorities to make improvements in old but serviceable houses and to lend up to ninety per cent. of £5,000 to those who want to buy their homes. Mr. BEVAN said blandly that the Government had never been against people owning their own houses, if they wanted to—a statement received with vociferous and hilarious doubt by the Opposition.

The Bill also enables local authorities to go into the laundry, furniture, removal and boarding-house businesses on any of their housing estates. This considerable extension of municipal trading passed, strangely, with little comment, and the Bill was given a Second Reading without a division.

Brightest interlude at Question-time was this query from Mr. FREDERICK

ERROLL: "Do you think that publication of the reports of the Post Office Advisory Council would be evidence that it is not moribund?" and the reply of the Assistant-P.M.G., Mr. HOBSON: "No, sir, I don't think so."

The Minister seemed puzzled by the laugh that followed.

**THURSDAY, March 17th.**—It was Bargain Day in the Commons. Mr. HUGH GAITSKELL, the Minister of Fuel, announced that we can get three tons of coke, instead of two, in the summer. Then he announced that the petrol coupons are to be worth their face value (instead of half) for June, July and August.

But then Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL, of the Ministry of Food, told the House she regretted to inform it that the meat ration was to be cut by 2d.—down to 8d. worth of carcase meat, 2d. worth of "bully."

"Mr. Maurice Webb (Lab., Bradford), asking the Mouse to reject the Bill on the second reading, said he did so because it was not capable of the kind of adjustment he would want to make in it in committee."

*Gloucester paper.*

Sounds rather like setting a trap . . .



"Who lives there?"

"No one—they all just go in at nine and leave at five."

## The Radio Dramatist

XIII

WHEN a play is based upon a tragic theme, and its atmosphere is sombre and mournful, a certain amount of comic relief must be introduced. This is even more necessary on the radio than on the stage, and for a very good reason. In the theatre the audience sit in semi-darkness, side by side and with their faces turned towards the stage. Thus, though their features may be convulsed with emotion, they have the comfortable assurance that their neighbours are unaware of it, unless indeed some very close-range peering be done, and this of course would be considered downright bad form. With the radio audience the position is different. Two people with tears streaming down their cheeks cannot face each other for long across a hearth-rug with any degree of comfort, and a feeling of constraint is inevitable. A knocked-out pipe brings a watery glare and even the most

stealthy use of a handkerchief will be keenly resented. A hearty laugh is needed, and I propose to discuss how we are to provide it.

A good many years ago I saw a play—I think it was by Ibsen—in which a man is ordered out of the house by his wife. He is standing on the threshold with his suitcase, the setting sun at his back, trying to heave up a carpenter's bench on to his shoulder, when his tiny daughter runs to him and implores him not to go. "Your mother does not want me," he replies. The tension is by now well-nigh intolerable and, as far as I can remember, Ibsen—if it was he—breaks it by making a bucket of whitewash fall on the husband's head as he is leaving the front steps. This is a good example of comic relief and it was well received by the audience.

We are not all Ibsens, however—or great playwrights, at any rate—and

we cannot expect to possess the miraculous sixth sense that inflames the dramatist's mind with the conviction that the moment has come for a bucket of whitewash—that and nothing else. We must be content to choose our comic relief from whatever has been shown by past experience to be indisputably funny.

It may seem odd that there should be anything very funny in the name of a street, but if it be well known to the members of the audience it is a curious fact that the mere mention of it will send them into paroxysms of laughter. Allusions to members of the Government or to matters very much in the mind of the audience have the same effect. I propose to concentrate for a moment on the use of the last two as a means of providing comic relief. The first is of little value to the radio dramatist. His is a large audience, and the fact that he can convulse Plymouth

is not of much account if he leaves the rest of the country miserably tense.

In a recently completed radio play I told the story of Simeon Stowe, a toy manufacturer. In a desperate bid to raise the money to pay his son's whist debts Stowe throws all his capital into one venture—a rubber duck for sailing in the bath. A fortnight later Mrs. Stowe receives a parcel from an old admirer, Rawdon Hocklebutt, whose proposal of marriage she refused in the distant past. It contains a rubber duck similar to that upon which her husband builds his hopes, but with one significant difference—Hocklebutt's duck goes "Quack, quack," when pressed. In a brief note he says, "I market this to-morrow. Remember Bagswick metal-workers' fête." (This was the occasion upon which Hocklebutt received his dismissal.) Mrs. Stowe flies to her husband with the news. In a wild outburst he reproaches himself for his failure. "Go to Hocklebutt!" he cries bitterly. "He is the better man and he has the better duck!"

It is at this point that the need for comic relief begins to be felt. Mrs. Stowe is pointing out that life may still be sweet though the larder be bare when the son enters, exclaiming "And in April Mr. Strachey will make it sweeter still!" This is good for a nation-wide laugh of about half a minute and the tension, built up not unskillfully, I venture to think, is happily relaxed.

In another play, when my hero was undergoing an operation, I secured comic relief by a reference to the scarcity of cigarettes. The wife is waiting outside the operating theatre and every now and then the surgeon rushes out to report on the progress of his work. Tension mounts as these reports grow more gloomy. There is a doubtful mumble about "breaking new ground," and finally an abrupt request for the loan of a hairpin. "They are rather scarce," says the wife uncertainly. "As scarce as cigarettes?" flashes the surgeon. Nothing more was necessary.

It sometimes happens that when a second presentation of a radio play is contemplated the comic relief is found to be dated. In such a case the Governors simply whip the manuscript into a brown-paper parcel and send it to the author with a brief note—"Repeat week Tuesday; re-topicalize," or something of the sort. The task presents little difficulty. Luckily, the supply of members of the Government tends to remain constant, and some matters, at least, will always be found in the minds of the public.

## Pin-Table

IT was Sympson who persuaded Gurkin of the Mariners' Arms to put a pin-table in his saloon bar. Munton-on-Sea is inclined to be a little bit dull in the winter and Sympson said that a pin-table would add greatly to the gaiety of the place and bring in new customers by the dozen. Gurkin held out against the idea for a long time, saying he did not approve of gambling, but in the end he saw an old pin-table going cheap at a sale and bought it.

"What do we get if we win?" asked Sympson, inserting a penny.

Gurkin looked round carefully to make sure that there were no policemen lurking about, and then dropped his voice to a conspiratorial whisper.

"If you score fifteen thousand," he said, "I'll give you a cigarette, and if you score twenty thousand I'll give you two cigarettes."

Sympson said that before the war in a hostelry in Llandudno the landlord used to give a whole packet of cigarettes for twelve thousand on a similar machine, but Gurkin said that things weren't the same as before the war and Sympson could take it or leave it, but that as he had bought the machine at Sympson's urgent request he should consider himself hard done by if Sympson did not have a go on it. So Sympson had a go on it. He put in his penny and the balls came up and the lights flickered and he pulled the trigger five times and scored just four hundred.

"The machine," he said, "is no good. To put pennies into it is just filling Gurkin's pockets. I shall play on it no more."

Personally I have very strong principles about gambling, but it seemed rather hard on poor old Gurkin not to use his machine after he had troubled to get it for us, so I risked a penny and scored six hundred. Sympson did not like to think that I could score more than he did, so he had another go himself, and then I had another go, and after that of course the abominable machine had us in its grip. Every time we called at the Mariners' Arms for our modest medicinal half-pint of ale we put our change into the machine, but the highest score that either of us ever got was fourteen hundred, and this Sympson only managed by illegally tilting the machine at exactly the right moment. As this score was thirteen thousand six hundred short of the figure required for a prize it was far from encouraging.

At times, when we are in particularly noble mood, Sympson and I manage to fight our craving for alcohol and cigarettes, but this wretched pin-table lured us in to the Mariners' Arms to an extent unknown before. If we could only once win a prize, we felt, its charm would be gone, but it looked very much as if we would both be bankrupt first. The other regular customers all fell under its evil spell, and the only man who never played on it was Gurkin himself.

"It's not that I'm frightened of developing the craving," he said. "I'm too strong-minded for that. But I don't see the fun of wearing myself out just to win my own cigarettes."

Sympson called an emergency meeting of the regular customers, and collected £2.

"If you can score five thousand on the machine," he said to Gurkin, "the money is yours. But it must be done of course in front of witnesses."

Unlike most of Sympson's schemes, this one worked. At first Gurkin just had an odd pennyworth in a nonchalant manner as if he could take it or leave it, but after a time he fetched his wife down from upstairs to look after the customers so that he could play uninterrupted. He was still playing when the doors were closed at two-thirty, and he played right through the evening, growing wilder and wilder of eye.

"I don't think we shall be worried any more by that pin-table," said Sympson complacently as we emerged into the street at ten o'clock.

He was right. Next morning a red-eyed Gurkin avoided our gaze as he poured out our medicine. An extraordinary thing had happened during the night, he said. Thieves or hooligans had broken into the saloon bar and hacked the pin-table to pieces with a chopper. He added that, curiously enough, with his very last go at 12.20 A.M. he had scored five thousand two hundred, but that, of course, as there were no witnesses he could not claim the £2. We pretended not to hear when Mrs. Gurkin put her head round the door a minute later and asked him what on earth he had been doing with the chopper to blunt the edge so badly.

D. H. B.

### Selfish

A COMPOSER who gives himself airs I can tolerate gladly, but there's No excuse for his conduct if he Thinks he never owes any to me.





*"Perhaps you only imagine you have these hallucinations."*

### 'Amlet's Tragedy or Mine?

**W**HEN Alice's birthday come rahnd last Toosday I surprises 'er good an' proper, cos wivaht for 'Amlet. Cost me a packet, I can tell yer, cos they was that booked up you'd 'ave thought it was a blinkin' Cup Final or summink. There weren't nuthink left but a box, so I 'ad that, an' it set me back a coupla quid an' all. I told 'em I thought they might 'ave chucked in a manicure and an' 'aircut for that as well.

Any'ow, I shoves on me best bib-an'-tucker on the Toosday, me ole ma gives me a woppin' great bag o' chocolate-creams an' I 'oofs it for Alice's.

It 'ad bin rainin' orf an' on, an' the pavements was all wet, so I can tell yer I was sweatin' pints 'case I got splashed. A coupla times when a bus came past I dodged aht the way into a shop an' 'ad to buy a box o' matches in one an' a toob o' toothpaste in the other. Then, blow me, when I'm almost there a bloke on a push bike goes tearin' through a puddle the size o' the Serpentine an' splashes me from 'ead to foot. I could 'ave 'owled,

straight I could. 'Course, I gets aht me 'anky to give meself a rub dahn, an' that makes me late at Alice's. Proper mad she was when she opened the door, I can tell yer.

"I thought you was never comin'," she says, real 'aughty. "Lose yore way or summink?"

"Sorry, Alice," I says, "but wot wiv 'avin' to keep aht the puddles an' doin' a bit o' shoppin' on the way, I got 'ung up. Then a bloke on a bike goes an' gives me a bath, so I've bin wipin' meself dahn for the last five minutes."

"Don't want nuthink sent to the laundry, I s'pose?" she says, proper sarcastic, an' nips orf to get 'er clobber. While I was 'angin' on for 'er I 'as another go at me soot, an' in the middle of it all in comes Alice again.

"For 'eaven's sake, Ernie Bloggs," she says, "stop muckin' yerself abaht!"

"We got to look after our clothes, 'aven't we?" I says. "You ain't got the country's interest at 'eart like wot I 'ave, Alice, that's yore trouble!"

"If you think any o' them Government blokes cares a tuppenny cuss abaht yore trahsis then yer must be barmy!" she says.

I didn't say no more. When women acts like that I shut up. If yer don't say nuthink they can't answer, an' if they can't answer they gets rattled. So I didn't say nuthink. . . .

We'd 'ad four penn'orth o' bus-ride afore anythink else was said. To tell yer the honest I was gettin' a bit worried cos I 'adn't reckoned on it goin' on this long. Then, thank 'eavens, Alice says summink.

"Wot are we goin' to see?" she says.

"Amlet," I says, casual-like.

"Oo?" she says.

"Amlet," I says. "You know, Shakespeare an' that."

"Oh, 'im," she says. "Shouldn't 'ave thought that was in yore line, some'ow."

"Wot's wrong wiv it?" I says.

"I dunno till I've seen it, do I?" she says.

"I've 'eard it's a bit of all right," I says. "Tragic an' that. You always said yer liked a good cry. Well, yer can 'oller till the cows come 'ome to-night."

"Wot, on me birthday?" she says.

"Cor lumme, Alice," I says, "wot's come over yer? Can't do nuthink

right, I can't!" Then, o' course, we was back where we was afore, sayin' nuthink.

When we gets to the theatre the next bit o' trouble starts. I shoves me 'and in me pocket for the tickets, an' finds them chocolate creams wot me ma give me spread all over 'em. 'Course, that sets Alice orf again.

"Well, for ever more," she says. "Wot a muck!"

"If you 'adn't leant against me so 'eavy in the bus," I says, me eyes narrowin' angry-like, "this'd never 'ave 'appened!"

Afore Alice could answer, a bloke in a smashin' dress soot comes sidlin' up, bowin' an' lookin' all 'umble.

"I got a box in this joint somewhere," I says, an' 'e was that surprised I thought 'e was goin' to fall over back'ards.

"This way, sir," 'e says, an' we toddles up a staircase wiv a carpet on it as thick as Sunday's gravy.

"Lumme, Alice," I says, comin' rahnd a bit, "ain't it soft under yer feet? Makes yer feel like yer was walkin' on tapioca."

"It ain't sticky," says Alice.

"Well, yer know wot I mean!" I says.

Then the bloke opens a door, an' Alice an' me troops into our box—leastways, Alice troops in. I might 'ave known summink would 'appen to me—an' it did! The ole jossor never said nuthink abaht a coupla steps dahn; took it for granted, I s'pose, that I 'ad a box at a theatre three times a week. Any'ow, I never saw 'em, an' afore yer could say mild-an'-bitter I was streakin' passed Alice like a jet-propelled aeroplane, an' fetched up 'angin' over the edge o' the box starin' straight at some nark playin' the joanna in the 'oller in front o' the stage. Proper winded I was, an' all, wiv a lump o' gold plaster rammed right acrost me stummick. The ole bloke was in a bit of a sweat too, an' 'elped me to me feet, dustin' me all over.

"Yer can skip that," I says. "If I was you I'd take a look arahnd to see if the ruddy place ain't burnin' dahn!"

"I'll just take your tickets, sir," 'e says, lookin' a bit queer at wot I said, an' 'e peels 'em orf me elbow an' 'ops it.

"For 'eaven's sake sit dahn!" Alice says, when 'e'd gorn. "You're makin' a proper exhibition of yerself."

That did it!

"Alice," I says, "I've 'ad abaht enough for one evenin'! I s'pose yer think I chucked meself dahn them steps a-purpose! I s'pose yer think I 'ates the sight o' chocolate creams so I goes an' plasters 'em all over the tickets to get rid of 'em! I s'pose yer

think I likes walkin' abaht in the wet in me best clobber, an' gettin' splashed from 'ead to foot by a silly twerp on a push bike! I s'pose yer think—"

Then they suddenly starts playin' "Gawd Save the King," just as if it was all over.

"Well, for cryin' aht lahd"—I says, an' Alice flares up again like a Roman Candle.

"Stand up, Ernie, can't yer!" she 'isses, an' as I does so I gets me 'ead caught in the curtain wot 'ung at the side o' the box, an' gets swiped in the ear'ole wiv a tassel the size of a yard broom.

"Stop foolin' abaht, Ernie!" says Alice. "Wot'll people think?" Cor lumme, I could 'ave brained 'er...!

Well, we saw 'Amlet all right, although I spent most o' the time

sittin' wiv me trahsis pocket inside aht, scrapin' the chocolate orf of it wiv the edge of an 'arf-crahn.

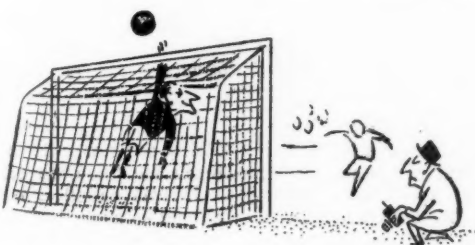
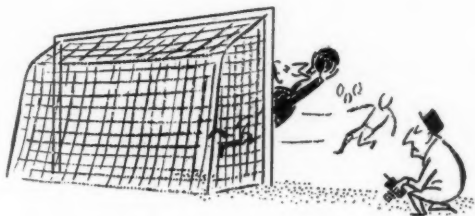
Then, abaht 'arfway through, summink 'appened wot give me a chance to get a bit o' me own back on Alice. 'Amlet's Judy comes saunterin' in actin' proper queer, an' starts loafin' abaht the stage wiv a bundle o' faggots under 'er arm an' singin' all aht o' toon.

"Alice," I says, wipin' me 'arf-crahn on a bit o' velvet plush, "there's one thing that bloke 'Amlet's got in common wiv me."

"Oh," she says, "wot's that?"

"Is girl friend's gorn crackers," I says, an' fairly doubles up o' laughin'.

Blimey, Alice didn't 'alf look daggers, but to tell yer the honest it was, the only bit o' fun I got aht o' the 'ole evenin'.



ONLY an obituary notice can be written for *Love's a Funny Thing*, which survived but three nights at the Ambassadors.

To speak of the deceased with even conventional regret is impossible on this occasion, and without wishing to be callous I must say that few stage infants can have passed away with better cause. It would be kinder to let it rest in peace, merely stating that Miss JANE HINTON adapted it from the French of M. CHARLES SPAAK and M. PIERRE BRIVE and that Mr. CLIFFORD GULLIVER fixed it for the stage; but the fact that it could be born at all raises certain questions of importance to the theatre.

Are we really so abysmally short of talent in this country that a playhouse noted for the sharper kinds of wit has to fall back on a comedy of almost unredeemed naivety, showing no trace whatever of Gallic origin and bearing at no point on any recognizable form of life on either side of the Channel? This is very difficult to believe. Our young writers, many of whom are anxious to work for the theatre, have by now had time enough since the war to settle down; and there must be many pieces, riddled with faults maybe but still showing some positive merit, sitting idle in managers' trays. The production of such a play as the one we are discussing is bound to be a heavy discouragement to any young dramatist who happens to see it, for he will not unnaturally ask himself if there can be any standards left, and his confidence in the judgment of experienced men of the theatre may be so shaken that he will abandon any further attempt to penetrate their citadel. The difficulty, as always, is to bridge the gap between the promising but unknown dramatist and the West End managers.

The latter are not fools, but they are apt to be trams, crowding on to the currently popular set of rails until at last it is ground to pieces. Only in the little coterie theatres of London and in the provincial reps are our young writers getting the encouragement they need and deserve, but even there the present heavy emphasis on revivals—

## At the Play

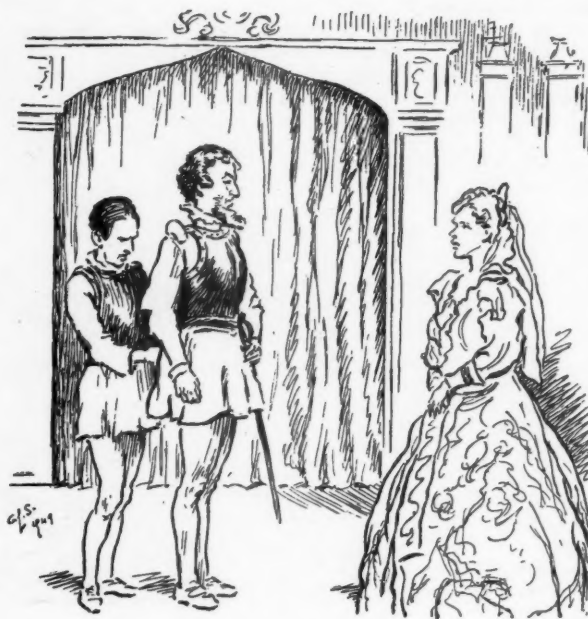
*Love's a Funny Thing* (AMBASSADORS)—Antony and Cleopatra (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON, DRAMATIC SOCIETY)

the supposedly gilt-edged policy which is seriously clogging our commercial theatre—is against them. The managers' answer to all this would be doubtless that running theatres is a business, in which they can't afford to mess about; and the counter-answer to that, if I may say so without offence, is that plays like *Love's a Funny*

production lagged a little and his groups of players, having once got into position, were rather inclined to stand still, but these are faults difficult to avoid with such a large cast, and the spirit of the play came through intelligently. An easier snag to counter might have been a certain monotony which became evident in the lighting and staging. The fixed set, by Mr. RAYMOND BOYCE and Mr. JOHN SMITH, was good (as were also their dresses), but we saw too much of it, and the eye tired; a curtain used as a background for the short scenes would have given some variety and also have had the advantage of bringing their action closer to the audience. I thought the most successful scene, as might have been expected from undergraduates, was the stag-party on board Pompey's galley, which reached hearteningly vinous proportions. It was a slight shock when the song at the end of it was sung to a modern negro rhythm, but what mattered was that it was sung with gusto.

The *Antony* of Mr. ADRIAN ROWE-EVANS had dignity and balance, but was somewhat gentle and soft-spoken for such a warrior. Miss GRACE ALEXANDER, starting a trifle uncertainly as *Cleopatra*, improved steadily, playing *Antony's* death-scene with admirable

feeling. Miss ENID MACARTHY was delightfully natural as *Charmian*, and Mr. GAVIN DOREY's *Eros* had ease and sincerity. The actor who stood out, however, was Mr. DEREK MOREL, whose *Cæsar* was excellently spoken and a leader of convincing authority. As for the music, there was brave trumpetry, which I liked, but it seemed to my conservative ear that some of Mr. JAMES ILIFF's orchestral accompaniment to this creditable evening would have fitted James Joyce better than Shakespeare. I may have been quite wrong. In any case, University College Dramatic Society are to be congratulated on a bold attempt at so formidable a play. ERIC.



(Antony and Cleopatra)

I AM TRYING, EGYPT, TRYING.

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Eros . . . . .        | MR. GAVIN DOREY       |
| Mark Antony . . . . . | MR. ADRIAN ROWE-EVANS |
| Cleopatra . . . . .   | MISS GRACE ALEXANDER  |

*Thing* are not only bad business but reach the stage too often.

It was called a comedy and was played as such, but it hung nervously on the edge of farce because it had none of the roots which hold a comedy in place. It was sited in a sentimental vacuum, where such sound performers as Mr. MERVYN JOHNS and Miss GWYNNE WHITBY struggled against fearful odds, and only Mr. MICHAEL MEDWIN scored, as a hesitant young vet. He had a better ball at his feet than the others, and he kept it there purposefully.

*Antony and Cleopatra* is a large slice of history to put on an amateur stage,



## At the Ballet

DANILOVA in *Coppelia*  
(COVENT GARDEN)

*Etude* (SADLER'S WELLS)

IT is more than ten years since America enticed ALEXANDRA DANILOVA away from us; but she is now back in London as the guest of the Sadler's Wells Ballet. She received a great welcome and mountains of flowers on her return to Covent Garden last week, and made a charming little speech of thanks from the stage.

"The most beautiful legs in ballet" are as lovely as they ever were, DANILOVA's technique is as flawless, and her dancing still bubbles over with vitality. She is an artist who spares herself not at all, even at rehearsals. She is an example and an inspiration; and like every fine artist she takes her tone from her surroundings. So it is not to be wondered at that her long stay in America should have left its mark on her art.

That is why on her first night last week we preferred DANILOVA the great classical ballerina as she appeared in Act III of *Coppelia*, dancing her variation and the *pas de deux*, to the *Swanilda* of Acts I and II. This *Swanilda*, for us, was not the simple peasant girl from Galicia jealous that her village sweetheart was attracted by pretty, frilly *Coppelia* sitting on a balcony demurely reading a book; she seemed to be an American 'teen-age college girl, complete with blood-red finger-nails, in a temper because someone had cut in on her "date." And her partner on the Galician campus, FREDERICK FRANKLIN, only added to the impression.

*Etude*, a Choreographic Study by NANCY McNAUGHT, with music by ANTONY HOPKINS and designs by VIVIENNE KERNOT, is the most ambitious production that Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet have so far presented. It is, too, our first introduction to a choreographer who clearly has something original to say, a highly-developed musical sense and wide command of her medium. For anyone who thinks that the possibilities of classical ballet as a medium are exhausted and that everything it can say has already been said, here is Miss McNAUGHT with a sheaf of ideas to prove them wrong. In *Etude* she uses sixteen dancers, the principals being DAVID POOLE, SHEILAH O'REILLY and HANS ZULLIG.

*Etude* is in three movements, danced



"This pen hasn't any sensational features—it just writes."

against a skyscape of dark turquoise and mist-grey, the stage framed in midnight blue. The dancers, who are used as a visual orchestra, are in classical dresses of grey shaded with blue and fuchsia-red. There is nothing in so soft, nebulous a setting to distract one from this essay in pure dancing. The choreography is extremely intricate, but always clear in design and free of meaningless gestures and untidy ends, for the choreographer's resourcefulness is as unailing as her musical instinct is sound; and even the most complicated pattern of movement resolves itself with apparent ease into some fresh and striking grouping, which in turn melts into another. In the second movement there is a sparkling *pas seul* for SHEILAH O'REILLY, and then a dance in canon for two pairs of dancers, one couple

leading the other by a few steps. From this, too, the choreographer obtains friezes that are lovely to look at, their effect enhanced by the audience's expectation of seeing the pattern complete itself when the second "voice" ends. And we greatly liked the dramatic "statement" by the male dancers of the main subject of the third movement, and its effective restatement later.

It is impossible to grasp all the details of a ballet like this in one performance, when music as well as stage action is unfamiliar; but *Etude* impresses one as being a quite brilliant realization of an effective and lively musical score. The choreography may be a little overloaded, but no ballet takes its final shape until it has had a number of public performances. The composer conducted. D. C. B.



"Humph! I see the canteen is putting another ba'penny on buttered buns as from next Monday."

### Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### A Russian Mystic

A SUPERCILIOUS, hot-tempered, egoistic, dissolute young man, an aristocrat among peasants and a peasant among aristocrats, a reckless and most unlucky gambler, *Leo Tolstoy* (LEHMANN, 25/-), as he first appears in a very long and superbly produced biography by Professor E. J. SIMMONS was none the less even then seeking vainly for a world of simple domestic peace. Although he quickly received recognition for literary masterpieces such as *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, some quality of perpetual unease stood between him and a straightforward literary career or any kind of moral repose. Even when after marriage and with many children growing up around him he found immense satisfaction in obeying the urge towards religion—a Christianity of his own interpreting—still the struggle went on. The blindly dogmatic opposition to established thought that carried him from extreme to fanatical extreme of conduct and belief not only brought him in conflict with Russian officialdom but tortured his friends and his family and a legion of readers floundering among his shining inconsistencies. In a finely sympathetic interpretation of the Count and his works Professor SIMMONS conveys an impression of intense agonized turmoil, of baffled attempts at emergence from black and sordid chaos, that typifies Russia of the revolution. Not less moving is his picture of the overwrought woman, his wife, saddled eternally with the burden of a husband's wild genius.

C. O. P.

#### Giants and Horses

Most of us have encountered, in either fact or fiction, one or other of the giant emblems cut out of the turf of (usually chalky) hillsides. Chesterton sang the White Horse of

Uffington. One of Hardy's fiddlers "knew no more of music than the Cerne giant." But the two giants, the seventeen horses, the crosses of Whiteleaf and Bledlow, and the regimental badges cut on the Salisbury downs by the men of 1914-18 have never been assembled in one volume until two generations of the Marples family collaborated to produce *White Horses and Other Hill Figures* (COUNTRY LIFE, 21/-). Not only have all the known British examples of "turf iconography" been investigated—and many of them illustrated with excellent photographs and diagrams—but the art of their tracery, and their scouring with its traditional festivals, are described by Mr. MORRIS MARPLES in animated detail. Boy Scouts are to be congratulated on having taken over the scouring since the war. (One hopes they sing the rollicking scourers' song noted by Thomas Hughes of Rugby fame, who was born at Uffington.) As for the origin of the figures, seldom was an antiquarian pitch more fiercely contested by rival theorists. The Uffington horse has the finest pedigree, and a vicious family likeness to the steeds on Iron Age coins. H. P. E.

#### George the Fourth

Mr. ROGER FULFORD's spirited if not very convincing apologia for *George the Fourth* (DUCKWORTH, 15/-), which first appeared in 1935, has now been republished to include numerous quotations from Professor Aspinall's recent edition of George the Fourth's letters. Mr. FULFORD gives a lively picture of the Regency world, but its central figure does not really fare much better at his apologist's hands than at those of his professed enemies. Here are some of Mr. FULFORD's judgments on George the Fourth: he was "a deplorable judge of character"; he sacrificed Mrs. Fitzherbert for cash down and an increase in his income; he had "a disagreeable and capricious taste for elderly women"; no one was "less fitted to endure unpopularity"; he showed a childish petulance over his marriage, all the misery it caused him being due to his own irresponsibility in taking the first eligible frump offered to him; when the Regency was being arranged he behaved with "alarming vacillation and weakness of character," and so on. Mr. FULFORD's championship of the Prince Regent seems to be inspired less by enthusiasm for the Prince than by disgust with his detractors, whom he represents as for the most part sanctimonious prigs. There were certainly many of these, but there were also Byron and Thomas Moore, Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb. The best that can be said for the Prince is that he was like a spoilt baby, endearing while things went well, but liable to pass in a moment from happy chuckles to howls of rage and anguish.

H. K.

#### Depraved New World

Mr. ALDOUS HUXLEY's contempt for his fellows, which, while never exactly genial, used to be salted with wit and tempered with irony, appears to have festered into a pathological hatred. It is true that of recent years he has grown fond of telling them what they must do to be saved from the doom which otherwise awaits them; but his directives are so remote from the potentialities, let alone the inclinations, of common humanity that they are, in fact, but counsels of the blackest despair. With *Ape and Essence* (CHATTO AND WINDUS, 7/6) he has returned to satire pure and simple, though neither of those adjectives, taken alone, is accurately descriptive of the resultant fantasia. In the form of a film-script, salvaged, appropriately enough, from a refuse cart, he has projected his

vision of mankind—or of a California that stands to him for mankind's epitome—as it will be after the third world war, when the powers of evil have won their final triumph. It is a picture so conscientiously revolting, so pertinacious in prurience, as to defeat its own presumed ends. In a satire, if it is to be effective, there must be some implication, however disguised, of the satirist's fundamental sanity. The essence of this one (to say nothing of the ape) resides in its sadism and its salacity; from which some not very original railing against nationalism and the dogma of progress, and a last-minute concession that there may, after all, be a way of escape for an infinitesimal few, do little to redeem it.

F. B.

### Pioneers

What Cobbett's "Cottage Economy" is to the self-sufficing English homestead, *The Land of the Crooked Tree* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 18/-) is to the American. It is more, because Mr. U. P. HEDRICK, Emeritus Director of the New York Agricultural Experiment Station, has incorporated the story of his boyhood with his parent's technique of living. Alongside a very human autobiography, you have the whole process by which a farm was carved out of virgin forest, brought to its productive peak and left with two old people—the author's father and mother—on "poor, sandy, good-for-nothing, sub-marginal fields." Father had always "moved on"—mother remonstrating. This farm, between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, was his fourth. Father produced, mother conserved, the whole family assisting; and the record of what they did produce and conserve is a whole treatise on agriculture and housewifery. The early 'seventies saw the two Virginians and their young family on the lake route to a land of stockaded shacks and Indian wigwams. The early 'nineties saw the boys off to college. Perhaps because there were no apples on the farm—only wild trees from pips sown by French Jesuits on Indian clearings—apples seem to have dominated Mr. HEDRICKS' expert affections. In any case he has paid his debt to L'Arbre Croche many times over—and not least with this valuable and delightful book.

H. P. E.

### An Englishwoman in War-time Germany

*The Alien Years* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 10/6) is the record of an Englishwoman's war-time experiences in Germany and Austria. The author, Mrs. SARAH MABEL COLLINS, left England in the summer of 1938 for Berlin, where her future husband, a Viennese physicist, was awaiting her. Having overcome the obstacles to their marriage set up by the Nazi bureaucracy, she and her husband settled down to a life of great personal happiness, clouded for her by homesickness and for both by dread of the approaching catastrophe. The great merit of this book is its downright simplicity. Nothing is overwritten, neither the air-raids which were already severe before the birth of her son, Tommy, nor her flight with Tommy from Berlin after Goebbels' warning to all women with babies to leave the city, nor the increasing grimness of life in Vienna with her parents-in-law. From first to last the author extracted whatever happiness her environment could be made to yield. In Berlin she taught English, had many friends, and managed an occasional holiday in the Austrian Alps with her husband. Vienna, when it became unbearable, she left for the Bavarian Forest, where she and Tommy lived with friends in a castle. Her husband finally rejoined her there, and during the American occupation they settled down to farming. But her longing for

England increased, and in July 1946 she returned with Tommy, her husband remaining behind with the expectation, or at least the hope, of being allowed in due course to rejoin his wife and child.

H. K.

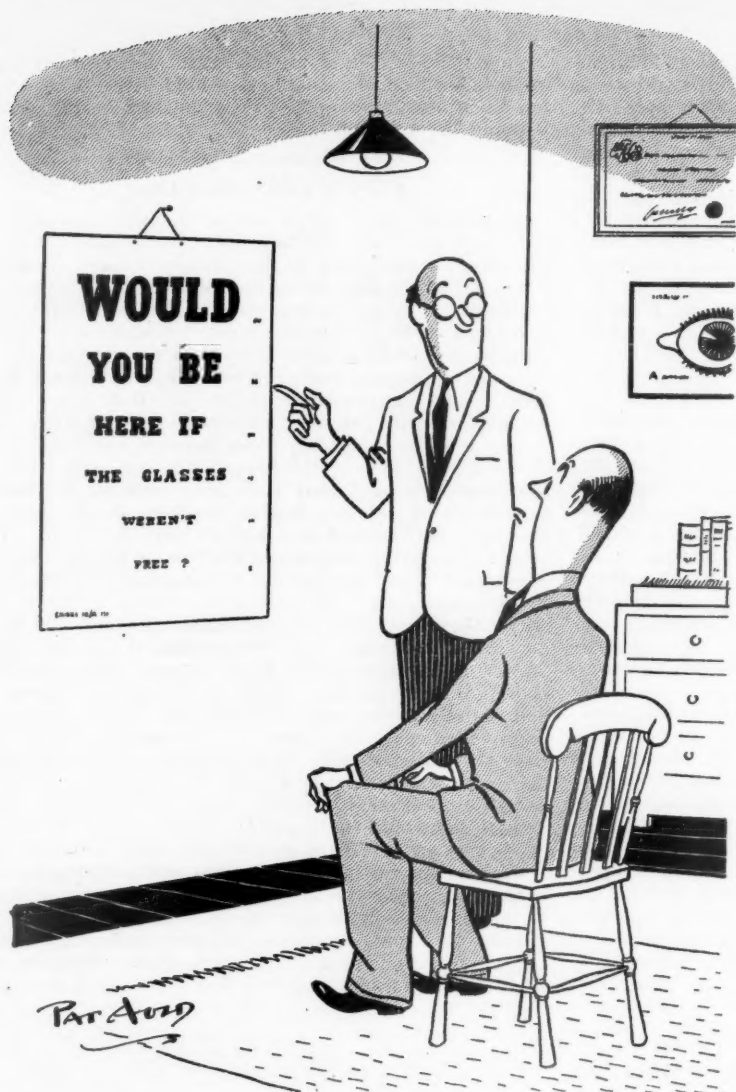
### A Critic Lays About Him.

Mr. ERIC BENTLEY is an American who takes a stern view, and no wonder, of Broadway and Shaftesbury Avenue; but the view he takes in *The Modern Theatre* (ROBERT HALE, 12/6), the English edition of his "The Playwright As Thinker," is so uncompromising that those who still discover a little good in the more intelligent commercial theatre, and would despair if they didn't, will find parts of the book depressing and even irritating. No doubt it is intended to be provocative, for Mr. BENTLEY clearly considers that the post-war stage needs shock-therapy. He is very sweeping. Priestley and Saroyan are "slicksters, troubled with immortal longings"; in the early 'thirties the former "wrote phony plays about eternal recurrence as expounded by the English magician J. W. Dunne." Maugham is dismissed in a line without benefit of "The Circle." Coward, Rattigan and Ustinov are left in oblivion; Shaw and O'Casey are the only two dramatists in England, where drama is reduced to the status of opera. As for the critics, they are in even worse case, though you would think a couple of lines might have been spared at least for Agate and Desmond MacCarthy. With his own countrymen Mr. BENTLEY is just as tough, deflating O'Neill with accuracy and roundly (and rightly) attacking the notion that pieces like "Oklahoma!" are a pure folk art springing mystically from the American soil. But though he sometimes sticks his neck out farther than is quite wise and seems to know almost more than is healthy about the German experimentalists he is at the same time a witty and often highly perceptive critic. On Shaw he is first-rate, on Ibsen and Strindberg interesting and balanced, while on the modern tendency to boost the arts of presentation at the expense of the drama itself he has excellent things to say. This is scarcely a book for those who have been ten times to "Annie Get Your Gun," but more serious playgoers will find it a sharp tonic.

E. O. D. K.







## Opera for Music-Haters

**O**PERA is all very well for those who are musical and those who say they are, but there has been to date no provision made for the opera-lover who is a music-hater. It's no good at all going to the opera if your interest lies in the story, because the synopsis on the programme is much too short to last all the evening. Would it not be possible to have an opera occasionally played straight instead of sung?

*Curtain Rises*      *Scene: A Wood*  
*Enter Princess*

*Princess.* Alas, alas, alas, alas. I am a Princess. A Princess. I am to meet here my Prince. My father has

forbidden our marriage. I am to meet here my Prince. My father has forbidden the marriage. The marriage. The marriage. The marriage. Now I am lost. I am lost. I am lost. Alas, alas, alas. Where can he be? Where can he be, be, be?  
(Repeat.)

*Princess crosses R. and gazes at audience. Enter Prince L.*

*Prince (to audience).* I am a Prince. Alas, alas, alas. I was to meet here my Princess. My love, my love, my love. Her father has forbidden our marriage. Her father has forbidden the marriage. And now I am lost. I am lost. I am lost. (Repeat.)

*Princess turns and sees the Prince.*

*Princess.* My Prince!  
*Prince.* My Princess! (Advance and embrace.)  
*Prince.* My love.  
*Princess.* I love you.  
*Prince.* My love.  
*Princess.* I love you.  
*Prince.* My love.  
*Princess.* I love you.  
*Prince.* Come away with me.  
*\*Princess.* Away?  
*Prince.* Away.  
*Princess.* Away?  
*Prince.* Away.  
*Princess.* Yes.  
*Prince.* Yes.  
*Princess.* Yes.  
*Prince.* Yes. (Repeat from \*.)

*Enter Duke*

*Duke.* I am the Duke. I am the Duke. I am the Duke. I am the Duke, I am. I am blackmailing the King, blackmailing the King, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I am blackmailing the King because I want to marry his daughter. So the King has no choice but to forbid, forbid, forbid, forbid the marriage of the Prince and Princess.

*Prince (starting).* The Duke!

*Princess (starting).* The Duke!

*Prince and Princess.* The Duke, the Duke, the Duke, the Duke!

*Duke.* Ha! I will fight you, fight you, fight you!

*Prince and Duke fight. Princess gets in the way and is stabbed. Falls.*

*Princess.* I am dying!

*Prince.* No!

*Princess.* I am dying!

*Duke.* No!

*Princess.* I am dying!

*Prince.* No!

*Princess.* I am dying!

*Duke.* No!

*Princess.* I die. (Dies.)

*Prince.* It's your fault. I will kill you.

I will kill you. I will kill you.

(Stabs Duke.)

*Duke.* I am dying! (Repeat six times.)

*Duke.* I die. (Dies.)

*Prince.* I will kill myself. I will kill myself. I will kill myself. I will.

(Stabs himself. Totters round stage.)

*Prince.* I am dying! (Repeat four times.)

*Prince.* Dying. (Repeat twice.)

*Prince.* I die. (Dies.)

CURTAIN.

This would need no music at all, and should a longer performance be desired it could, no doubt, be expanded. Should there be any public outcry it could quite easily be turned into a comedy.

## H. J's Belles-Lettres

**W**HEN I was requested by the "Ink Is Thicker Than Blood Club" to help spread international billing-and-cooing by correspondence, my conscience forced me to accept a pen-pal from Southern Europe. I did not intend to spend much time on this chore, so, squeezing it into the part of my day earmarked for virtue, I bought a copy of *The Polite Cable-Writer* and let fly. The exchanges between pal and self I subjoin, to defend myself from slurs that I have not done my share in bringing The Dawn to the boil.

Expect mutual epistolary profit. Suggest discuss latest productions polite literature. Promise omit topics unsuited female pen.  
Servant, H. JENKINS.

**DEAR PEN-PAL,**—So happy I am to press to my lips your message. Hurry, hurry to send more. I am all alone and my step-brother and step-father make all the time for to poisoning me. The eatables taste noxious. Please send to me some good antidotes. Would you a wee cub for petting? I send him you straightway. Please post postage. Would you a photograph of me? My cousin would film same very cheap.  
Lovings, ROSA.

Gratitude letter. Find true Child Nature. Forwarding pamphlet anent Mithridates. Pray report excavations vicinity. Favourite dramatic heroine Lady Bracknell.  
Servant, H. JENKINS.

**DEAR PEN-PAL,**—Your message fed the fires in my bosoms. Soon, soon send more. The small book is not one wee bit helpful. My family sneer that Mithridates was have been no match for their poisonings. My affianced is bribe to side against me by payment of dowry in advance. He drive a dart at me but bless my corsetings it blunt. Would you a flowery garland grown by me? Send money for packagings and it is thine. Are you marry? If nay, I will be a good bride to you. My affianced can be bought away cheap.  
Lovings, ROSA.

Gratitude letter. Well content you devotee Goddess Flora. Forwarding monograph English maestro Capability Brown. Pray favour notices migrations feathered denizens, eclipses, prodigies.  
Servant, H. JENKINS.

**DEAR PEN-PAL,**—Your message was joyous to your Rosa. Quickly respond again. This Brown I care not for, not one stiver. My step-mother, she cut the bedposts for to smother me. But it is a dummy in the bed. My affianced say he will stick you if you trifles with me. I think if you send him a hat like Lord Eden wear he will not stick you. Would you a view of the Cinema Astorissima all in small seashells? I will dispatch same soon as ever I receipt your guinea.  
Lovings, ROSA.

Gratitude letter. Silence anent excavations insinuates savants unrewarded. Antigone replacing Bracknell primacy affections. Instructive learn preference Mediterranean maidenhood. Forwarding collected notices commentator Verity.  
Servant, H. JENKINS.

**DEAR PEN-PAL,**—Weep with happiness did your message make me. This Verity he work and he work and I see no end in him. Please send me more gay presents. Your wooing need the brush up bad. Beppo and Luigi pickaxe away the cliff while I stand on it but I hold on to bush

roots and shameface them. Please send me a gun and some bullets. Make it a sports gun that will shoot games afterwards. Would you a large box what I carve? It is better it go cargo boat. It will be cheaper for you.

Lovings, ROSA.

**DEAR SIR JENKIN,**—Do not believe what Rosa write you. It is bad lies. Please tell English Primminister she is a fibber. She chop her kiddy brother so he need stitches. The chirurgeon will not remove same till feed. Please fee him kindly as stitches now irk. I send you a fruit-basket as token of how I am gratefilled to you. The Postal Office say there be no need to pay until on delivery. Worry not, all arrangements to that end are made.

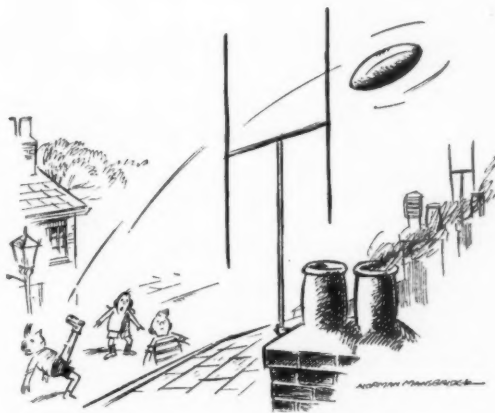
Deep respects, ANTONIO.

Gratitude letters. Salute new transmarine friend. Perusing latest fiction judicious Huxley. Value critique same. Regret Verity disesteemed. Forwarding transcript commonplace book containing metereological observations embellished moral lessons.  
Servant, H. JENKINS.

**DEAR PEN-PAL,**—Must write hastily as about to take refuge from uncle who go about to quash me with hand-bombs. I will disguise me and reach you by winding routes. Please have pretty dresses ready for me and forget not to command the bridal cake from the best bakery. Please hastily send cost of masquerading as film-star. It seem according to the common book that England is very wet. Please buy me smart umbrella.  
Lovings, ROSA.

**DEAR ESQUIRE JENKINS,**—If Rosa arrive near you please confine her till we can come and fetch. She has done bad things like forging death certificate of her aunt, who flourishes mightily, and selling Giovanni's infant cheap. Beware of her baggage, there is acid in it. When we come we leave grandfather here as he not wish to settle in England; do not, therefore, sweep a room for him. Please take care of boxes and insure them as soon than they come.  
Obedience, BERNARDO.

Gratitude letters. Regret ineluctable termination agreeable correspondence. Early commencing extensive travels. Opine international amity much furthered.  
Servant, H. JENKINS.



## It's Only a Game.

I DO not enjoy playing doubles in serious games of tennis. I play a specialized kind of game and rarely combine well with my partners if they have played the game before and have become set in their ways. It was particularly unfortunate when I was drawn with the champion of the club in the doubles, for he was very set in his ways.

Yet I felt very confident on the day of the first round. I had just bought some new non-skid, shock-absorbing tennis-shoes, some special non-slip shorts, and a new racket. I wanted to do justice to the champion, who now came galloping on to the court like a soccer team. I was new to the club and he had not seen me play yet. Our opponents were plainly overawed, but they pulled themselves together later when they noticed that my partner and I were not combining well.

Very early on I found that my new tennis-shoes were not suitable for tennis. Not only were they non-skid, but they were reluctant to leave the ground at all. When I did manage to get them loose there was a queer squelchy sound as they came away. I had to give each foot individual attention in order to move from one part of the court to another. The excessive weight of the redundant shock-absorbers added to my difficulties. I felt as if I were going uphill on skis. They would have been excellent shoes for golf provided that the wearer could be wheeled in a perambulator from shot to shot. I did manage to develop a kind of technique in which I trudged towards the ball and leaned out an angle of forty-five degrees in order to make a stroke, but there was no time to perfect it.

"Why," said my partner, after we were three games down, "do you run as if you were trying to extricate yourself from a swamp?"

"It's my shoes," I said. "They stick to the ground."

"Why do they stick to the ground?"

"The soles are equipped with thousands of little suckers," I said, quoting the advertisement.

"Well, change them," he snapped; for, like most champions, he took the game very seriously.

After I had changed my shoes with somebody who was not playing at the time, I expected to run about freely.

It was most upsetting when my non-slip shorts began to fall down. Perhaps they had begun to fall down earlier, but I had been obsessed with my feet. After shorts have slipped a certain way they begin to clog one's movements. Sometimes I tried hopping and running from my knees downward like a dicky-bird, and sometimes I stumped around holding up my shorts at the back with my left hand, but I could see that my partner disapproved. He took to beating at the net with his racket.

"Why," he said, after we were a set down, "do you hobble around as if your knees were tied together?"

"It's my non-slip shorts," I explained. "They keep slipping down."

"Why do they keep slipping down?"

"The non-slip gadgets which are little miracles of ingenuity and make a belt superfluous are not working properly."

"Well, go and get a belt," he said as though he were chewing a glutinous substance.

It was easy to find the fellow who had changed tennis-shoes with me. He had not gone very far and said that he had no further use for his belt. He looked older than when I saw him last.



I was now able to concentrate on my tennis. I played with such cunning and put such a variety of spin into my shots that all our opponents could do was to come up to the net and hit them before they bounced. Even when I served they came up quite close to the net, for my serves have a tendency to bounce twice if my opponents stand too far back.

"Why," my partner said, after we were another two games down, "do you feed them with dollies at the net?"

"In singles," I said, "a low flat shot is the best, but in doubles the best kind of shot is one that is dropping as it passes over the net."

"Maybe," he said, giving himself a painful blow on the shin with his racket, "but not when they are dropping from about twenty feet."

I was hurt. I abandoned my spin and began to hit the ball hard. Then it was that I found that my new racket was made in a peculiar fashion. It must have been heavier on one side than on the other. If I hit the ball with what I suppose must have been the heavier side downwards the ball went high up out of the court, and if I had the heavier side uppermost the ball went into the net.

"Why," said my partner, after we were another two games down, "do you hit the ball either straight into the air or straight into the ground?"

"It's my racket," I explained.

"Your racket," he mused. "I suppose one side of it is equipped with thousands of little suckers and the other side isn't."

"No," I said, "it's heavier on one side than on the other."

"Let us change rackets," he said, passionately calm. "I don't know which is the heaviest side."

He seemed to have lost all control over his grammar.

After that we combined better. He said that he was going to play right up at the net and that I was to play right behind him in case he missed any, or alternatively I was to play at the net, put them off the scent by pretending to hit the ball, and then leave it to him. We won three games in a row.

"We shall soon be in the second round at this rate," I said.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I hadn't thought of that."

We lost the match after all. I am going to join yet another club, where I hope they do not take the game so seriously.

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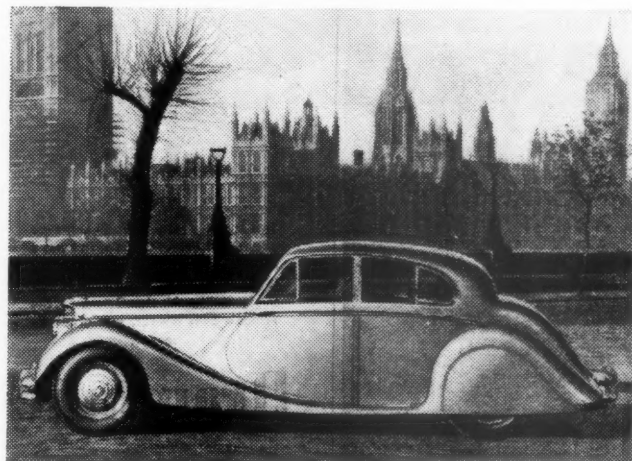
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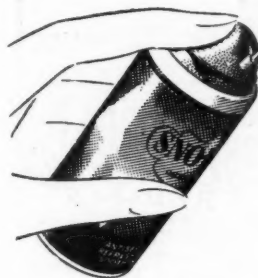
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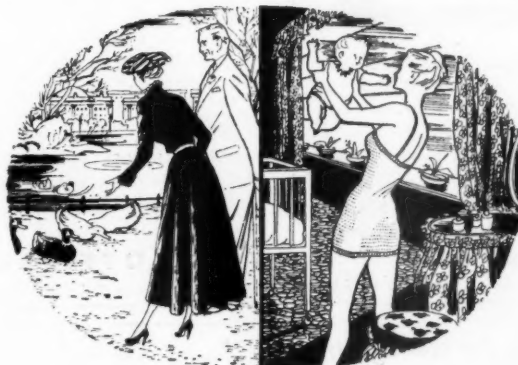
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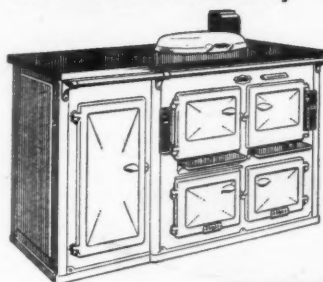
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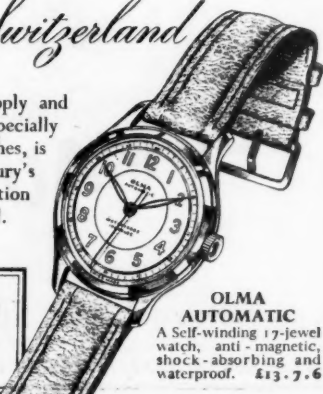


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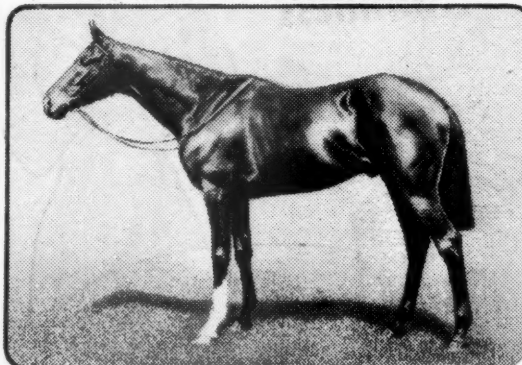
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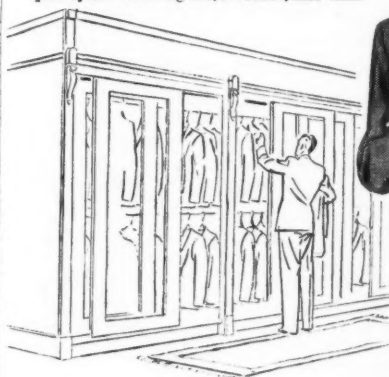


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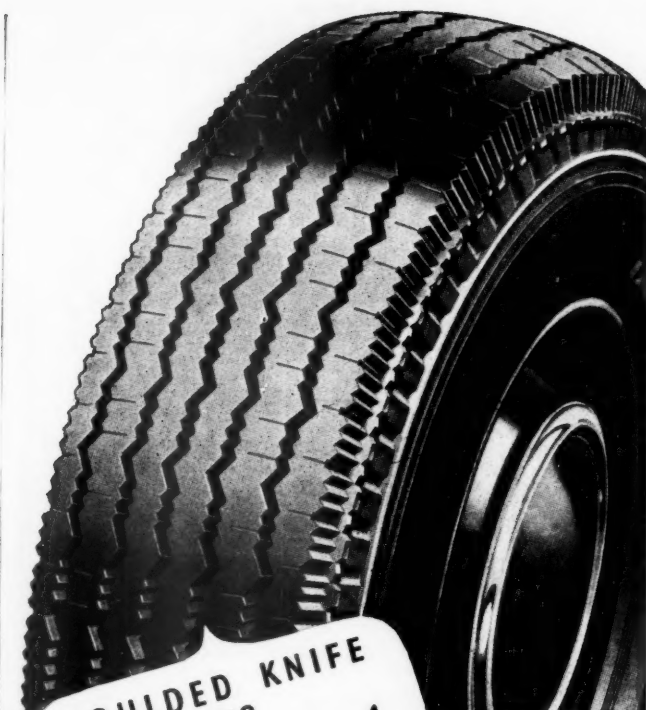
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